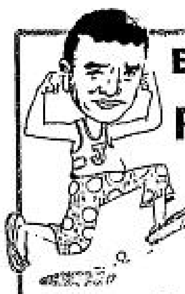


ENTERTAINMENT / D7

Pinoy sitcom is dead,
says TV-film director
Jose Javier Reyes

METRO / A17

Dengue cases reach
epidemic levels in
Valenzuela, say execs

SPORTS / A23

Russia trips US
Cuppers, forges
final vs Argentina

NEWS / A2

Charter plebiscite
by January 2007,
says De Venecia

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, September 26, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 290 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Fraport, Piatco execs face criminal charges

By Armand N. Nocum

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has recommended to the Department of Justice the filing of criminal charges against executives of the German-based Fraport AG and Philippine International Air Terminals Co. for allegedly allowing foreign investors to own 61.4 percent of Piatco, which built the mothballed Terminal 3 of

FRAPORT/ A4

Egg attack won't stop Esperon's return to UP

By D. Pazzibugan
and C. Avendaño

A FEW ROTTEN EGGS won't deter Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. from returning to the University of the Philippines.

EGG ATTACK/ A6

BINIGAY NYO NA LANG SANA SA MGA NAGUGUTOM

10,000 cases vs Thaksin

Thai military rulers may freeze assets of ousted PM

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S TOP graft buster on Monday said the country's military rulers might freeze the assets of ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and members of his Cabinet if evidence were found that they had tried to transfer their wealth abroad.

Sawat Chotiphanit, the newly appointed head of a corruption committee, spoke to reporters after the military junta began multipronged investigations into alleged wrongdoing by Thaksin and members of his fallen government.

Thaksin and his group are facing "tons of documents and 10,000 unresolved (corruption) cases," and were given 30 days to report their assets, according to Kranarong Chantik, a member of the National Counter Corruption Commission.

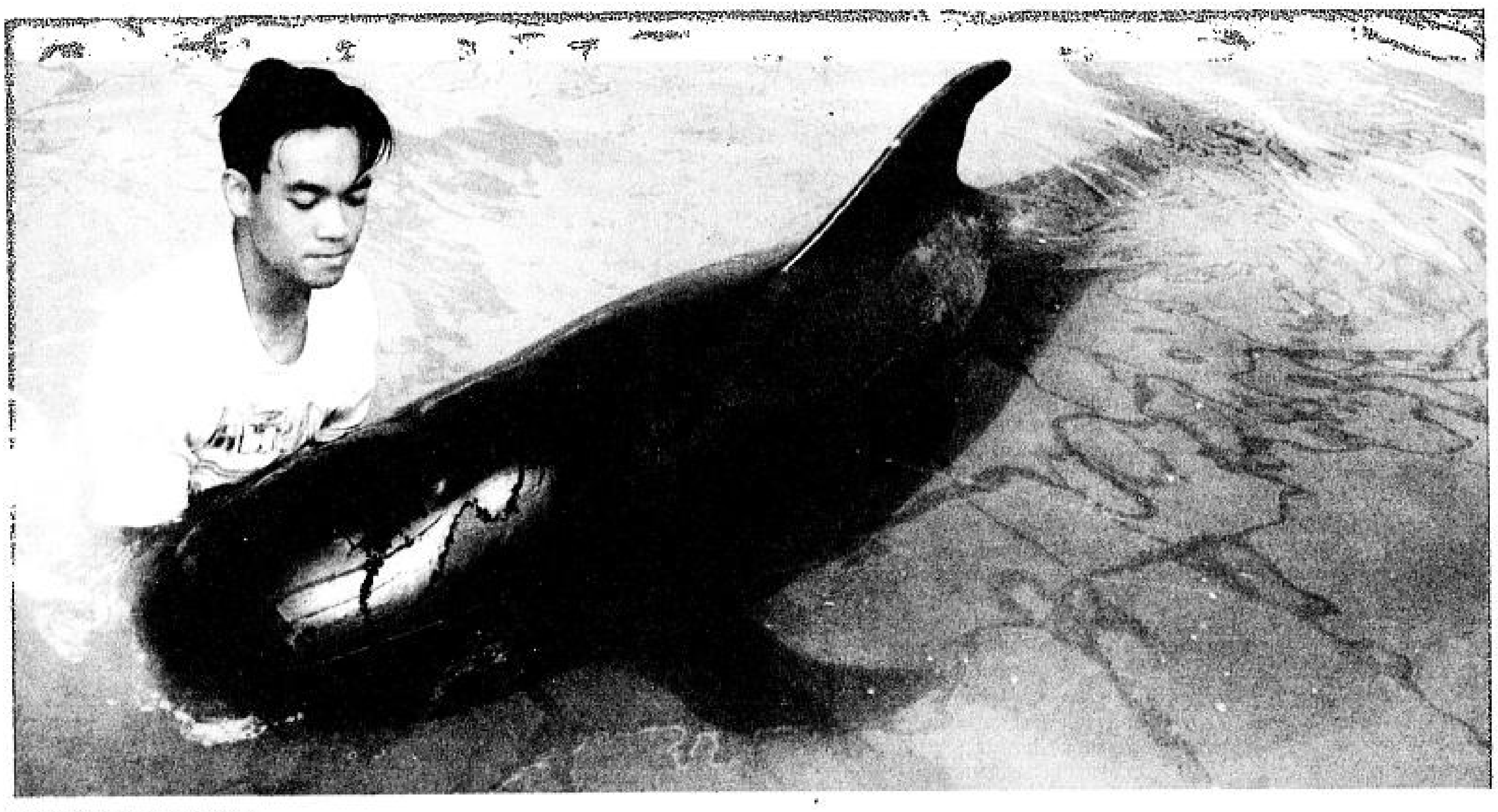
A thorough probe and prosecution of the guilty would be almost unprecedented in modern Thailand, where corruption reaches into the highest levels of power and wealth.

Past efforts to seize unlawfully gained assets had petered out or been overruled by subsequent governments.

"If we find evidence that they tried to transfer their assets overseas we will freeze the assets," Sawat told reporters.

Earlier, one of Thaksin's lawyers told The Associated Press that Thaksin, now in exile in

10,000 CASES/ A4



SAVING A DOLPHIN
An employee of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center in Dagupan City attends to a weak 10-foot Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) which was found in the waters off Nibaliw Narvarte in San Fabian, Pangasinan.
RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Rebel ma gives up NPA to be with 5 children

By DJ Yap

EVERY TIME SHE GAVE BIRTH, FRANcia found herself making a painful choice between caring for her baby and carrying on the struggle as a cadre of the New People's Army.

Always, she ended up choosing ideology over motherhood. As each of her children was born, she left them in the care of other people.

"A month after I gave birth, my child would be sent to a caretaker—each of them to a different family," she said in Filipino. "I would get to visit them maybe once a week. But they never really thought of me as their mother."

"That was just the way it was," said the 31-year-old mother of five.

"When you're inside (the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines), there's no distinction between men and women. You forget you're a woman; you forget you're a mother," she said.

But after years of fighting in the mountains, Francia finally realized it was time to choose family over principle.

In May 2001, she left the communist movement and surrendered to the government in order to be reunited with her children.

Hers was one of the stories told at yesterday's Peace Tech 3, a dialogue among youths on the impact of war and conflict on women.

The forum connected students and teachers at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, with their counterparts at the Notre Dame University in Cotabato City.

It was the third in a series of telecon-

REBEL MA/ A4

Guimaras wildlife sanctuaries offer hope

-TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

By Blanche S. Rivera

(Last of a two-part series)

THE OLD SONG GOES, "WHEN the swallows come back to Capistrano ..."

At this time of year, migratory birds fleeing the freezing winds of Siberia and northern China wing their way southward in search of warmer climes. Many of them find their way to Guimaras.

As in many other parts of the country, the migratory birds spend the northern wintry months in natural wildlife refuge areas similar to what a team of Silliman University scientists found recently in many unspoiled parts of Guimaras.

In a happy case of environmental serendipity, the Silliman study, commissioned by Petron Corp., found "pockets of unaffected coves and lagoon" in Guimaras, which they recommended be conserved because they are "biodiverse and geologically unique."

The 24-member team was led on a weeklong expedition around Guimaras by Dr. Angel Alcala, former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and renowned expert on coral reefs.

The study was commissioned

GUIMARAS/ A15

BAGS of oil debris are loaded on a barge at the wharf in Cabalagnan, one of the Guimaras villages hardest hit by the oil spill.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Mangroves to hasten recovery

ARAB EXPERTS WITH EXPERIence in the largest oil spill cleanup in history have recommended working with natural processes after initial interventions to minimize ecological damage.

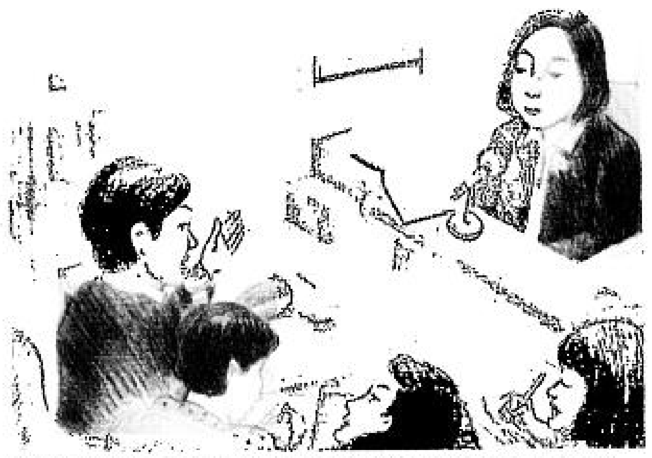
The experts, who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters, said that based on their experience with history's largest oil spill after the 1991 Gulf War, the use of chemical dispersants after the first 72 hours "will add no value."

The experts, hired by Petron, said in a report made available to the INQUIRER that the cleanup efforts must "focus on the physical removal of the oil" from affected surfaces. "Just remove the sludge, then leave the environment to clean itself," they said.

They said that based on worldwide studies of the long-term effects of oil spills on the environment, "natural recovery might take one to 20 years, but it may be faster for Guimaras because it has lots of mangroves." *(See related story in Across the Nation, Page A13.)*

Mangroves are part of the complex ecosystem found in Guimaras, which also includes sea grass which thrive in shallow salt marshes, and extensive coral reefs surrounding the island.

MANGROVES/ A15



DEFENSE witness Dr. Teresita Sanchez under cross-examination by State Prosecutor Hazel Valdez in this artist's sketch. STEPH BRAVO

Defense rests case in Subic rape trial

By Tarra V. Quismundo,
Volt Contreras
and TJ Burgonio

THE DEFENSE RESTS.

The lawyers of the four US Marines accused of conspiring to rape a Filipino woman last year closed their presentation of evidence yesterday, with their expert witness returning to the stand for cross-examination.

It had taken the defense counsels of accused Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier two weeks to present six witnesses for their side.

In contrast, the prosecution had taken 11 weeks to present 23 witnesses, with the burden of proof on their side.

"As a lawyer, I think there was no rape here based on physical evidence of the case and on the testimony of witnesses. The absence of injuries in [the complainant's] inner thighs and knees is very important and significant in this case considering the conditions and circumstances where the alleged sexual intercourse occurred," said Smith's lawyer, Ricardo Diaz.

Silkwood's counsel, Jose Justiniano, was also confident his client would be acquitted.

"Based on the testimony of

DEFENSE/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2006

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/09/25/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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JDV'S FEARLESS FORECAST

Charter plebiscite by January 2007

By Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

IF THE CHARTER CHANGE "EXPRESS" IS NOT DErailed, a plebiscite on a new Constitution could be held by January, according to Speaker Jose de Venecia.

On the eve of oral arguments before the Supreme Court on a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, De Venecia told the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines in Makati yesterday he expected the "wise men of the Supreme Court, who are also men of integrity and wisdom, to give due course to the very strong will of the people."

Malacañang was even more optimistic.

Palace officials said yesterday they were also focused on pushing for Charter change—with an interim parliament in place by January.

This after the Supreme Court begins hearing today the arguments of all sides on the petition filed by the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines and Sigaw ng Bayan to reverse the Commission on Elections' rejection of a people's initiative to effect changes to the Constitution.

Specifically the amendments would change the form of government from a presidential to a parliamentary system.

De Venecia hinted the Supreme Court would uphold the people's initiative because the close to 9 million voter signatures gathered by Ulap and Sigaw ng Bayan "represent a strong moral force."

"Assuming the Supreme Court will decide in 45 days, including on [any] motions for reconsideration (by the Senate and anti-Cha-cha groups), a 60-day campaign period will follow," he said.

"So it (a plebiscite) should be around January," he added.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said Malacañang was hoping the Supreme Court would rule on the people's initiative petition "with urgency and dispatch" because this was a matter "imbued with supreme national importance."

"We're racing against time," Claudio told the INQUIRER. "We're competing with preparations for the mid-term elections under the present setup."

The "ideal scenario" envisioned by the Palace is to have a plebiscite by December or early January next year, Claudio said.

This was in order for the interim parliament to be set up by January, he said in a phone interview.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the administration wanted to exhaust all efforts in pushing for Charter change but admitted things should start happening by December.

"We should have a clearer picture toward December because by mid-January, candidates would have to file their certificates for candidacy," he told reporters, referring to preparations for the mid-term elections in May 2007 if Charter change were not effected earlier.

At the same time, Ermita denied a news report Palace officials were in the process of winnowing the candidates for senator of the administration, as claimed by Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor.

But Defensor was at it again yesterday, floating the names of possible administration candidates for the Senate, including Ermita himself, which the latter promptly denied.

Like Ermita, Claudio said he was not aware of any talks on the administration's senatorial line up because "we're consistent with our advocacy" for Charter change.

Erap wants to attend Cha-cha hearing

By Norman Bordadora

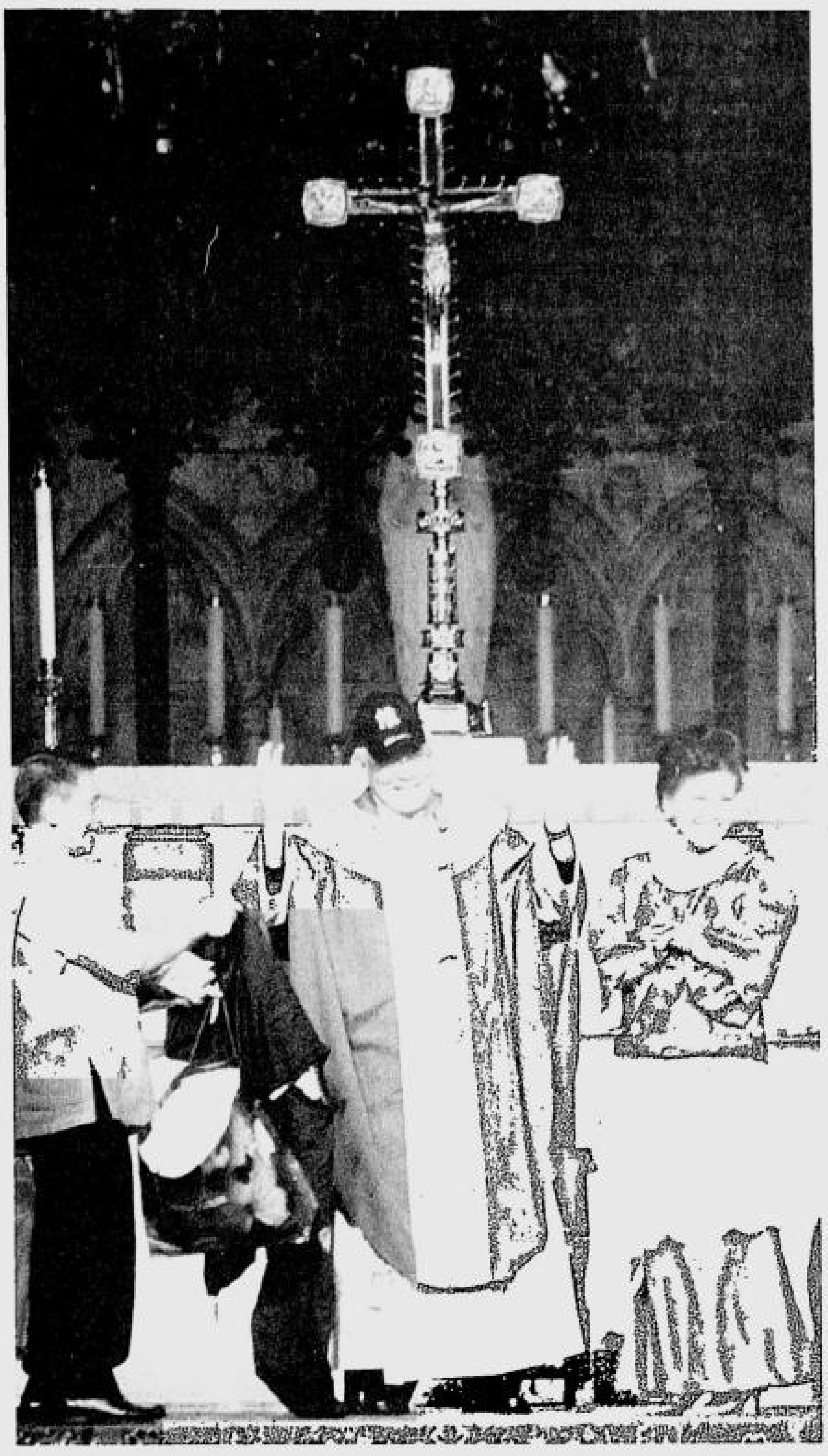
FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan special division to allow him to attend today's oral arguments before the Supreme Court on the people's initiative as a means to change the 1987 Constitution.

Lawyer Rene Saguisag admitted that the manifestation was made at short notice because of a miscommunication between Estrada's defense panel in the plunder trial and Estrada's lawyers who filed his and the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino's opposition to the initiative before the high tribunal.

"[I] got a telephone call from the principal accused [on Sunday afternoon] seeking that we file forthwith a motion for leave to be able to attend the oral argument in the Supreme Court tomorrow," Saguisag said.

Estrada wanted to take part in the proceedings "on an issue of transcendental importance on the people's initiative," the lawyer added.

"[This] motion [was not] filed earlier because of [a] miscommunication as to whether we or counsel in the Supreme Court case should have filed this paper," he said.



CARDINAL'S CAP

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales (center) tries on a New York Yankees baseball cap, a gift from the Filipino community, shortly after celebrating Holy Mass on Sunday at the St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Leading the Filipino faithful who packed the cathedral were Ambassador Lauro L. Baja Jr. and Consul General Cecilia Rebong.

ELMER CATO/CONTRIBUTOR

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'Gag' order riles Senate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A WORD WAR BETWEEN THE SENATE AND the Supreme Court escalated yesterday with Sen. Franklin Drilon taking it to the floor and demanding that the spokesperson of the high court clarify his statement about a "gag order" being imposed on senators, on pain of contempt, with regard to their investigation of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

Drilon did not like the tone or implication of the statement, saying SC spokesperson Ismael Khan announced the gag order "as if the Senate is a subordinate of the Supreme Court."

Drilon was also riled by Khan's seeming threat to haul in senators for contempt should they violate the so-called gag order. Senators and congressmen are vested by the Constitution with "absolute immunity" from contempt. He cited Article VI which states that "no member (of Congress) shall be questioned or be held liable in any other place for any speech or debate in the Congress or in any committee thereof," said Drilon.

"If we comment (on the issue) right here in this hall, do we get summoned to the court to explain?," he added.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said justices could be unaware of the constitutional provision granting lawmakers immunity from contempt for making comments on any issue.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, who argued for the Senate in the Supreme Court hearing of the PCGG petition questioning the Senate's authority to arrest their commissioners for refusing to testify at investigations, explained that the gag on making comments on the matter was "by mutual agreement" among the SC, the Senate and the PCGG.

The Supreme Court temporarily suspended the Senate hearings and allowed PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio to go home, pending resolution of the PCGG petition questioning the legality of the warrants of arrest issued by the Senate against PCGG commissioners.

Senate President Manuel Villar has already directed Senate legal counsel David Jonathan Yap to explain to Khan why the senators were "upset."

On Drilon's motion, the Senate also ordered Senate public information chief Jose Garcia to also write Khan to inform him about the sentiments of the senators.

Meanwhile, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede added more fire to the tussle by saying that Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel should face contempt charges for commenting on the issue of alleged anomalies in the Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) despite the gag order brokered by the Supreme Court.

With reports from Alcuin Papa

Mayuga: Danga's time has passed

By Dona Pazzibugan

AFTER COMING CLOSE TO LOSING HIS post, Navy Flag Officer in Command Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga said his reported challenger could no longer aspire to be Navy chief—that is, if Malacañang follows the law.

Word spread at the Navy headquarters last Saturday that Vice Adm. Tirso Danga, chief of the military's Western Command, would be appointed Navy chief on Sunday, Sept. 24.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. denied the rumor, but Mayuga himself appeared unsure about his tenure.

"We follow legitimate orders. As of today, there are no orders from higher headquarters relieving me as Flag Officer in Command so I would presume that I'm still the Navy chief," Mayuga said when interviewed at the Navy headquarters yesterday afternoon.

"If there's an order [for my relief], I will go. But in the absence of orders, I stay," added Mayuga, who returned from a weeklong trip to the United States last Saturday night.

Danga refused to take phone calls from the media over the weekend.

He was at the Wescom headquarters in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan when the INQUIRER finally reached him through his cell phone yesterday afternoon.

"I have no comment," he said.

Asked if he would like to answer allegations against him, he replied: "They're just intrigues," and promptly turned off his cell phone.

Mayuga will not retire until Dec. 9, but according to at least two senior Navy officers, Danga lobbied for his appointment as Navy chief by Sept. 24, exactly a year before his mandatory retirement.

Since no appointment papers came out last Sunday, Danga no longer has a chance to be Navy chief, according to Mayuga.

He cited Republic Act No.8186 which states that officials who have less than a year left in the service cannot be appointed a major service command. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

A case of the wolf guarding the hen house

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S A CASE OF THE WOLF GUARDING THE hen house.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's own internal affairs chief was arrested on Saturday at his home for possession of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu and drug paraphernalia.

SPO4 Glenn Logan was arrested at 10:30 p.m. in Barangay Pantok, Binangonan, Rizal, by PDEA and Rizal provincial police operatives, according to Rodolfo Caisip, PDEA deputy chief for administration.

Logan will be charged before the Pasig Prosecutor's Office with violation of Republic Act No. 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, for possession of two packets containing 10 grams of shabu and a weighing scale, Caisip said.

If found guilty, he could face a life sentence.

Prior to his arrest, Logan was the lead investigator into the Aug. 21 break-in at the PDEA's evidence room at its Quezon City headquarters where seven kilos of shabu worth P35 million were stolen.

"We are in the process of establishing any link between Logan and the group [that stole the shabu]. We are just waiting for the lab tests on the evidence recovered before criminal cases can be filed," Caisip said.

In the evidence theft, two agency officials—Superintendents Jerome Mutia, chief of Special Enforcement Services, and Gustavo Torres, chief of the Administration and Human Resources Department—were tagged as suspects along with three PDEA guards.

Mutia was arrested Monday last week at a mall in Fairview, Quezon City. Recovered from him was 125 grams of shabu.

The PDEA said the other suspects surrendered to authorities.

They were identified as Insp. Jofredo Padillo and security guards Oliver Fernandez and Gene Granada. Torres remains at large.

Granada executed an affidavit pointing to Mutia as the mastermind of the theft.

He said he was given only P135,000 of a promised P1 million as his share of the loot.

Caisip said Logan was under surveillance for three weeks after being suspected of involvement in the sale of shabu.

He was arrested on the strength of a warrant issued by Judge Reynaldo Ros of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 33.

"It's sad but we have to do this. We can't really perform our jobs very well if there are people who work against our mission," said Dionisio Santiago, PDEA chief, at a press conference Sunday night where Logan was presented to media.

P1.4B more sought for PNP

By Norman Bordadora

INTERIOR SECRETARY Ronaldo Puno yesterday urged his former colleagues in the House of Representatives to approve the P1.429-billion supplemental budget proposed by Malacañang for the DILG this year.

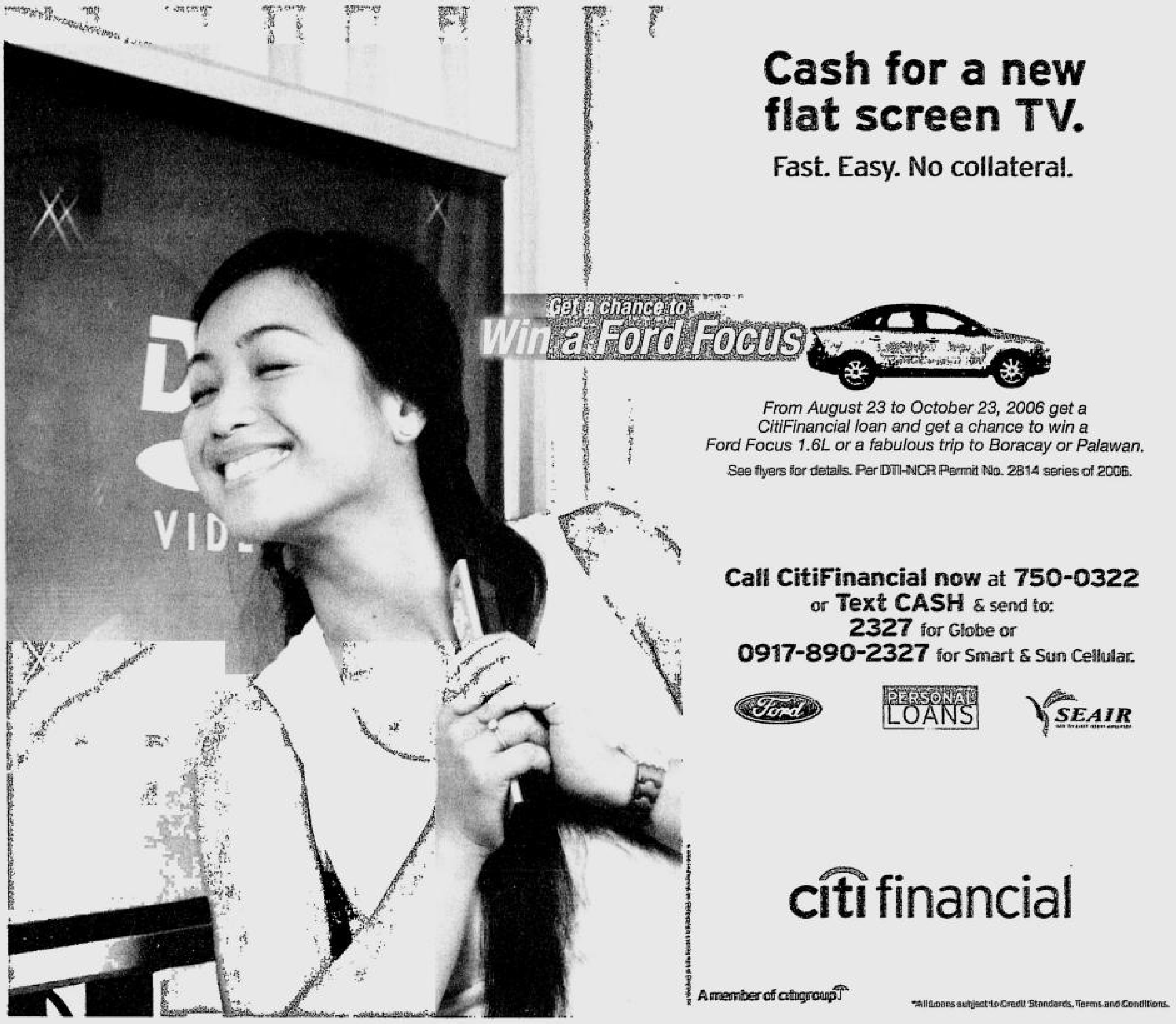
Puno also asked that another P1 billion be allocated for the department next year to cover, among others, the purchase of 5,000 guns and 500 police cars as the PNP takes a more active part in insurgency operations.

"Out of the P1.429 billion supplemental budget proposed by the Department of Budget and Management (for this year), P748 million will be used to pay the back-earned pensions of 3,067 injured and disabled policemen since 2000," Puno said.

He said that some P51 million of the supplemental budget would fund the hiring of 500 new jail guards for the undermanned Bureau of Jail Management and Penology which supervises over the country's municipal, city and district jails.

He said that P39 million will be used to hire 200 new firefighters for the Bureau of Fire Protection "which has long needed upgrading, having to cope with the acute shortage of manpower and facilities."

Puno said a total of P590 million will go to the salary adjustments of employees of the BJMP and BFP and the cadets of the Philippine National Police Academy.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10,000 cases vs Thaksin; junta may freeze his assets

From page A1

London, would probably testify to prove his innocence.

Auditor General Jaruvan Maintaka said his office had finished an investigation into the shady purchase of airport security scanners and the construction of transport links to Bangkok's new international airport, which opens Thursday. She said a report on the investigation was almost finished.

Widespread corruption

Her office is one of several independent bodies probing alleged corruption in Thaksin's government.

Thailand's military rulers, who seized control during last week's bloodless coup while Thaksin was abroad, revived the National Counter Corruption Commission to investigate widespread allegations of graft under his five-year rule.

Thailand's ruling military council also established an even more powerful commission, headed by Sawat, with authority to seize assets of politicians and their families.

Thaksin remained in exile in London, reportedly having given up attempts to regain power. His wife, Pojamarn, left Bangkok to join him early Monday, a senior airline official said.

Influential wife

Pojamarn, widely regarded to have wielded great influence on her husband's decisions, left on Thai Airways International carrying five suitcases with her, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give statements to the press.

Thai officials denied Thaksin had left Thailand with an "unusual" amount of baggage, amid reports the ex-premier may have whisked away cash from the country before the military coup.

Thaksin left the country for a series of foreign engagements 10 days before the coup that ousted him, and a later flight from Bangkok brought officials to a summit in Cuba that picked up Thaksin in London on the way.

"Both flights took off from the military airport and the amount of luggage was not unusual," Group Capt. Montol Suchookorn, a Royal Thai Air Force spokesperson, told Agence France Presse.

Speculation had centered on the reported "high" number of luggage stowed on board the two aircraft, at a time of swirling rumors that a coup was imminent.

The military-operated Airbus 320 Thai Koo Fah—the Thai equivalent of Air Force One—and the chartered Thai Airways flight that followed five days later were not packed with a large amount of baggage, officials said.

Wichit Plangsrisakul, a lawyer for Thaksin in Bangkok, told The Associated Press that Thaksin and some former ministers were prepared to cooperate with the investigators.

"I have not yet talked to Prime Minister Thaksin and his family but I believe that he is ready to testify to clear himself," Wichit said.

All the ministers he had spoken to told him they had committed no wrong, the lawyer said.

Riddled with bribery

Some of Thaksin's close associates have been called in for questioning by the ruling council while others have offered to cooperate with it, including former Agriculture Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan, the deputy leader of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party.

"I have met and had some talks with him (Thaksin). He urged me to convey the message to our people that we have to halt all activities for the time being and extend full cooperation to the (military council). All activity has to halt," Sudarat told reporters.

On Sunday, the junta announced that a nine-member committee, headed by Sawat, would investigate alleged wrongdoing in the Thaksin administration, focusing on a number of mega-projects that some suspect were riddled with graft.

"There is a sufficient evidence to believe that (members of the former government) abused their power to reap benefits for their personal gain, and caused serious damage to the country," the military said.

If it is proven that wealth was acquired illegally, the committee has the power to freeze or confiscate the assets of a politician, his or her spouse, and children. *Reports from AP and AFP*

How much is Thaksin worth?

HERE ARE SOME KEY FACTS ON the wealth of Thaksin's family, estimated at $2.2 billion in a July report on Thailand's 40 richest people by Forbes magazine:

- Thaksin and his wife Pojaman set up a small computer dealership in 1983. It evolved into the present-day Shin Corp. with interests ranging from mobile phones and satellites to the Internet and media.
- On Jan. 23, the Shinawatra and Damapong families sold a controlling 49.6 percent stake in Shin to Singapore state investment firm Temasek Holdings for 73.3 billion baht ($1.9 billion) in cash.
- The Shinawatra family also holds interests in advertising, entertainment and real estate, including property developer SC Asset Corp.

SC Asset, with a market value of $67 million, is 60.8 percent owned by Thaksin's wife and two daughters. Thaksin's sister is chair of the company.

- Thaksin's son, Panthongtae, owns a stake in How Come Entertainment Co. and Master Phone Co., a luxury mobile
- Thaksin's wife also owns land in Bangkok. *Reuters*

Fraport, Piatco execs face criminal charges

From page A1

the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Under the Constitution, foreigners can own only up to 40 percent of public utilities.

In a letter to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, Victor A. Bessat, deputy director for Special Investigation Services of the NBI, said "there appears to (be a) probable cause to prosecute" Fraport and Piatco officials for violating the Anti-Dummy Law, also known as Commonwealth Act No. 108.

If found guilty of violating the law, officials of Piatco, Fraport, Philippine Airport and Ground Services (PAGS), Philippine Airport and Ground Services Terminal Inc. (PTI), Philippine Airport and Ground Services Terminals Holdings Inc. (PTH) and People's Air Cargo & Warehousing Co. Inc. (Paircargo) could face imprisonment of up to 15 years.

Those recommended for criminal prosecution were Piatco president Cheng Yong, Fraport vice president Peter Henkel, Jason G. Cheng, Jefferson G. Cheng, Rita Bonifer, S. Samin Aydin, Lilia G. Cheng, Hachiman Yokoi, Gil Camacho, Katherine Agnes M.C. Arnaldo, Jorg Seyffart, Marife T. Opulencia, Mary Antonette P. Manalo, Ricardo C. Castro Jr., Hans Arthur Vogel, Dietrich F. R. Stiller and Noemi S. Dacanay.

Documents obtained by the NBI showed that except for Fraport, Piatco and the other companies involved in the Naia 3 project had common officers and directors.

Bessat, acting on behalf of NBI Director Nestor Mantaring, also submitted to the DOJ comments made by Roberto S. de Alban and Joselito R. Amon of the NBI-Legal Evaluation Division, and a complaint affidavit of Melanio Elvis M. Balayan, convenor and executive director of the Concerned Lawyers for Moral and Effective Leadership (Clamor).

In his complaint, Balayan accused the officers and executives of Fraport, Piatco, PAGS, PTI, PTH and Paircargo of violating the Constitution and laws imposing nationality restrictions, particularly the Anti-Dummy Law and Republic Act No. 7042, or the Foreign Investment Act of 1991.

RA 7042 provides that foreign ownership in entities engaged in the operation and management of public utilities, including airport terminals, is limited to 40 percent.

"In view of the grave danger and the adverse 'cascading' and rippling effects of these violations to the national interest, the immediate investigation and prosecution of the instant case is not only warranted but (also) imperative," Balayan said.

Nationalized activity

He said that under Section 11, Article 12, of the Constitution, the operation of public utilities, such as Naia 3, is a nationalized activity, as it may only be undertaken by corporations organized under the laws of the Philippines, of which 60 percent of the outstanding capital stock is owned by Filipino citizens.

However, Balayan claimed that Fraport, in collusion with officials of Piatco, PAGS, PTI, PTH and Paircargo, circumvented the law limiting foreign ownership in public utilities to 40 percent.

After acquiring shares in the companies, including a 30-percent stake in Piatco, Fraport's total direct and indirect interest in Piatco reached 61.4 percent, according to Balayan.

"Fraport directly owns 30 percent and indirectly controls, through respondents PAGS, PTH and PTI, 31.4 percent of respondent Piatco, giving Fraport a 61.4 percent interest in Piatco," he said.

Based on the Anti-Dummy Law, Balayan said the Cheng family, Paircargo, PAGS, PTI and PTH had fronted for Fraport in acquiring shares in Piatco.

The violations allegedly committed by Fraport and Piatco officials will add to the legal problems that prevent the opening of Naia 3.

Arbitration court

Fraport is demanding $465 million in compensation for Naia 3 and is pursuing its case against the government in a World Bank arbitration court.

Malacañang said the government would send a copy of the writ of possession to the Singapore-based International Chamber of Commerce arbitration tribunal, which last month ordered the government to return possession of the terminal to Piatco for failing to pay it just compensation.

Piatco filed an arbitration case with the ICC after the government expropriated the facility in 2004.

The consortium built the terminal under a "build-operate-transfer" contract, but in 2002 President Macapagal-Arroyo revoked the contract for being tainted with graft.

In December 2004, the government filed a case for expropriation in a Pasay City court so it could take over Naia 3. The court ordered it to pay Piatco $62.3 million (about P3 billion) as partial payment for the facility.

In 2005, the Supreme Court gave the go-signal for the government to operate the terminal, but it also upheld the Pasay court's ruling that the government pay Piatco the P3 billion.

Restraining order

This was opposed by Ilocos Sur Rep. Salacnib Baterina who filed a motion to intervene in the expropriation case. It was Baterina's petition to the Court of Appeals that became the basis for the temporary restraining order blocking the release of the payment to Piatco on Aug. 29.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said early this month that the government would take full control and push for the opening, possibly in early 2007, of the mothballed terminal after a major legal obstacle to its possession of the facility had been lifted.

Ermita said the Court of Appeals had lifted the injunction it issued on Aug. 29 stopping the payment of the P3-billion initial compensation to Piatco.

Ermita said Piatco would get the money and this would pave the way for the Pasay court to issue a writ of possession to the government.

With the writ, he said the Manila International Airport Authority could go ahead and complete the remaining work to be done on the facility, arrange for the airlines' and concessionaires' lease contracts and prepare for the terminal's opening.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
MATSUI. FIL INTERNATIONAL CORP. Rm. 308 Makati Executive Center 114 L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village Makati City	Kuo-Wen Hung	President
OPEN PINOY DOT COM CORP. Unit 101, G/F E-Square Bldg. 416 Ortigas Ave., Greenhills San Juan, Metro Manila	Sung Woon Cho	President
BAUER FOUNDATIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. Unit 405, WEB-JET Acropolis, 88 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. Acropolis Greens Subd. Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Sakda Namwong	Drilling Rig Operator
JFE ENGINEERING CORP.-PHIL. BRANCH Unit 905 Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Yu Nakamoto	Assistant Project Director
CHINA ROAD AND BRIDGE CORPORATION Suite 1001 Ma. Natividad Bldg. 470 T.M. Kalaw Ave., Ermita, Manila	Hongquan Xu	Administration Manager
A PLUS CHINESE LANGUAGE CENTER & PRE-SCHOOL, INC. 4/F, Festival Mall, Corporate Ave. Muntinlupa City	Lingli Jiang	Mandarin Language Teacher
A PLUS CHINESE LANGUAGE CENTER & PRE-SCHOOL, INC. 4/F, Festival Mall, Corporate Ave. Muntinlupa City	Lu Pang	Mandarin Language Teacher
A PLUS CHINESE LANGUAGE CENTER & PRE-SCHOOL, INC. 4/F, Festival Mall, Corporate Ave. Muntinlupa City	Jianhong Zhou	Mandarin Language Teacher
PSC INFO TECHNOLOGY INC. 31 Anchorage St., Merville Parañaque City	Suriyanti	Administrative Manager
PSC INFO TECHNOLOGY INC. 31 Anchorage St., Merville Parañaque City	Atan Junaidi	Director
WAWTELL INC. P2 Hanston Bldg., Emerald Ave. Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Jinhee Lee (w/o Hur)	Senior Consultant
PILIPINAS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES INC. 28/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Wilhelm Albert Kainama	Indonesian Customer Service Associate
NOKIA (PHILIPPINES), INC. 20/F Philam Life Tower Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Olli Sigfrid Karlsson	Business Controller
A PLUS CHINESE LANGUAGE CENTER & PRE-SCHOOL, INC. 4/F Festival Mall, Corporate Ave. Muntinlupa City	Haini Tang	Mandarin Language Teacher
FUJITSU TEN SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F East Tower PSE Bldg. Ortigas Complex, Pasig City	Takanori Fujiwara	Section Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Sept. 26, 2006)

Rebel ma gives up NPA to be with 5 children

From page A1

ferences on issues concerning the youth.

During the forum, women who were caught in armed conflicts talked about their experiences before a large group of mostly high school students.

About 750 students listened in at UP, while an audience of more than 1,100 attended the forum at Notre Dame.

Tears

Francia was the first speaker. When she began her story, she was calm and collected, but as her narration went on, emotion took over, and she shed tears.

A native of Bicol, she was only 19 when she was recruited to the NPA. "It was not my original intention to join. I was supposed to be applying for a job, but when we were taken to a camp, I just went with the flow."

Married to a comrade

After six months of training, she went to see her family again. "We were all in tears. My parents said they were afraid for my sake. They pitied my condition because I had grown so thin," she said.

"But in the end, when I was talking to them, it was as though I was also trying to recruit them (into the NPA)," she said.

Married to a comrade

Francia assumed combat duty within the organization and, for 12 years, fought government forces in Southern Luzon.

She married a comrade, and gave birth to five children, with ages now ranging from 3 to 12.

As standard policy in the camp, every time Francia gave birth, her child was taken away to be reared by different caretakers.

"They (her children) didn't even know each other. And they only thought of me as a relative," she said. "It was difficult knowing my children were growing up with other people."

"It hurt me, but I just tried to ignore the sad feelings. I couldn't do anything. I had no choice," Francia said.

This went on for many years, she said, until one day, she just woke up wondering why she could not live a happy life with her family.

"When I became older, I realized that the ideals of my youth were not as important as my children. I longed to be with them," Francia said. "I wanted a good future for them."

Complete

Today, her family is complete. Her husband turned himself in to authorities three weeks ago, out of concern for their 7-year-old daughter who is in a hospital for a lung infection.

"I'm happy now that we're a family," she said. "I may have made bad choices for my children. But I hope they'll understand me when they're older."

Her children may still be getting used to the idea of themselves being a family, after growing up in different households.

But Francia is unperturbed. After all, she now has all the time in the world to look after them.

The organizers and partners of Peace Tech 3 were the Assisi Development Foundation, Center for Peace Education of Miriam College, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Unicef, Australian Agency for International Development, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

FRANCIA gave up life in the mountains to look after her five children. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, September 26, 2006
25th Week in Ordinary Time
Cosmas & Damian

1st Reading: Pro 21:1-6, 10-13
Gospel: Luke 8:19-21

Then his mother and his relatives came to him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and wish to meet you." Then Jesus answered, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

Commentary

God weighs our hearts and is interested in our practice of justice and truthfulness. We are watched always by the Just One and it is known when we ignore the cry of the poor. As we have heard and responded, so our God will respond to us. This is justice. And Jesus is clear with his disciples that if we wish to know intimacy and closeness with him and God our Father than we must hear the word of God and put it into practice. This is justice in Jesus' family. We are bound by Word, not by family ties, blood or marriage. How close are we to Jesus and to the Father, really?

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GMA plans to lend billions to poorest villages

By Gil Cabacungan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS planning to provide billions of pesos in micro-financing credit to the country's poorest villages using thousands of social workers as conduits.

"We want the Department of Social Welfare and Development to flood these areas where there are no conduit so that we can reach all corners of this country, broaden our reach and boost our per capita income beyond $1,400 per Filipino," said President Arroyo in her keynote address at the 25th anniversary of the National Livelihood Support Fund.

The President lamented that despite the billions in pesos of funds available for micro-finance, "there are places where they do not know about this at all, which shows that we haven't really reached all 42,000 barangay."

For a long time, she noted, government financial institutions like the Land Bank of the Philippines could not lend directly to intended beneficiaries of the micro-credit programs because they only lent "wholesale." Recipients, she added, had to avail themselves of the loans through conduits such as the cooperative in their area.

She said this situation had been corrected with the signing of Executive Order No. 558 which instructed government entities to lend their money through social workers of the DSWD.

The President brushed off concerns that lifting the prohibition on direct lending of GFIs to small borrowers would lead to behest loans. "There is no worry. Finance Secretary Gary Teves is now working on guidelines," the President said.

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Gov't earmarks P500M to set up UP 'Silicon Valley'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES campus in Diliman, Quezon City, is getting a P500 million budget to set up the country's version of "Silicon Valley," a ranking House leader said yesterday.

Deputy Majority Leader Luis Villafuerte said P500 million has been earmarked in this year's P46.4 billion supplemental budget "for the infrastructure development" of the 22-hectare Diliman Science Complex and Technology Incubation Park at the UP main campus.

The lawmaker, who recently led a group of scientists that visited Malacañang, said the allotment will boost the country's science and technology (S&T) sector.

In her State of the Nation Address in July, President Macapagal-Arroyo vowed "to invest in strategies for global competitiveness, including the mobilization, upgrading and dissemination of new knowledge and technologies for productivity."

Villafuerte said the Diliman hub would serve as the national center for research and development in the natural and applied sciences, and mathematics.

It is patterned after the Stanford University-Silicon Valley area in California and the Hsinchu Science Park in Taiwan, he said. In these areas, high technology hubs are located close to a cooperative university.

Haydee Yorac's mother dies at 90

JOSEFA B. YORAC PASSED AWAY IN THE gRACE of our Lord on Sept. 23, 2006 at the age of 90.

She is the mother of the late Haydee B. Yorac, UP law professor and former chair of the Commission on Elections and Presidential Commission on Good Government, who died on Sept. 12 in Chicago last year.

She is survived by her daughters Evelyn and husband Manny, Stella and Bert, Margot, Carmen and Mark, Amy, son Joey and grandchildren Francis, Sarah, Heather and Sandy. Family and relatives request friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Chapel, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City. Interment will take place after the 10:30 a.m. funeral Mass on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2006 at the Garden of Eternity, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Almanon passes away

DOMINGO PERMALER ALMANON DIED ON Sept. 23, 2006. He is survived by his loving wife Rosario Y. Almanon and children: Marichu, Dulce, Rubi, Dominique, Carla, Rhea and Roan.

His body lies in state at the Waling-Waling Chapel of Funeraria Filipinas, Alabang-Zapote Road, Las Piñas City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2006, at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 9 a.m. Mass at Funeraria Filipinas.

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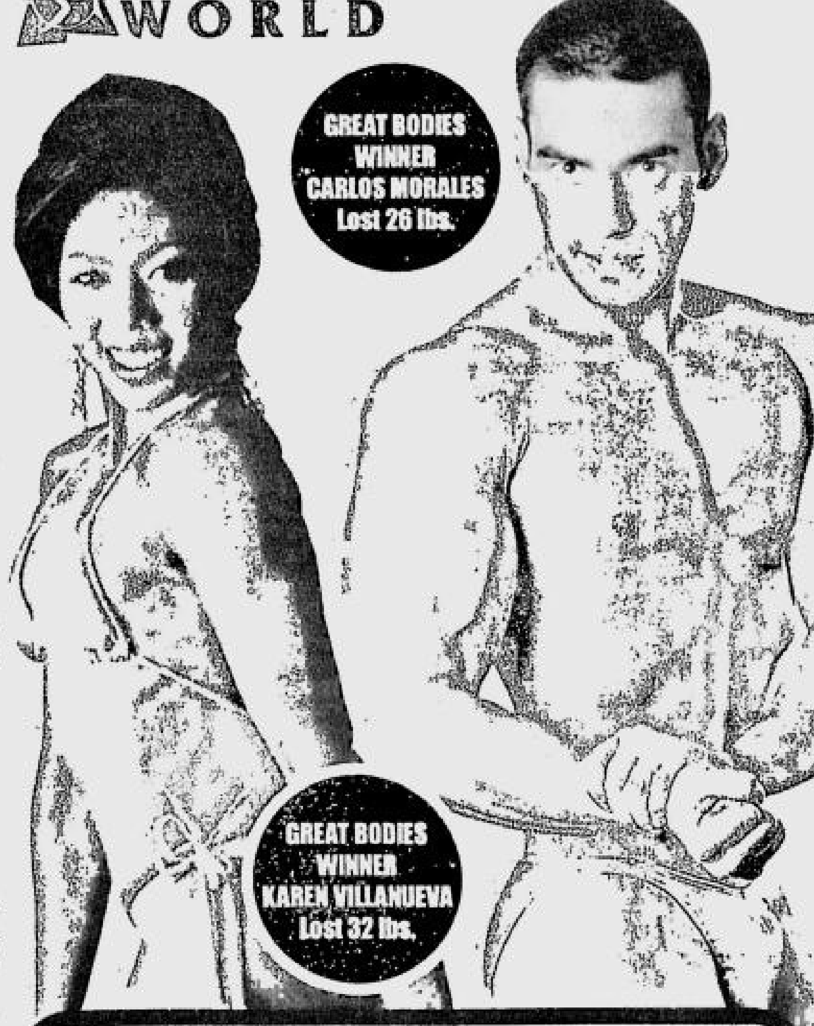
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MEGAMALL 637 76 43 / 0916 247 97 63 PASAY ROAD 887 36 30 / 0916 689 30 88 PASIG 647 38 16 / 0916 309 46 23

Defense rests case in Subic rape trial

From page A1

witnesses as well as the physical evidence, we have created reasonable doubt that rape was committed. Normally, you have only two eyewitnesses in rape (the complainant and the alleged rapist) … It seldom happens that rape is witnessed by a third party," Justiniano said.

The complainant "Nicole" had accused Smith of raping her as the three other accused cheered him on while they were on board a Starex van traveling inside the Subic Bay Freeport before midnight on Nov. 1, 2005.

The complainant said she was too drunk to have put up a fight against Smith, who allegedly pinned her down at the back of the van. Owing to her intoxicated condition and her fragmented memory that night, Nicole told the court that she had no recollection of the actual intercourse and only later realized she had been abused when she felt pain in her private parts.

Smith, however, denied the allegations. He said he and Nicole had consensual sex that night.

He said that the complainant, then 22, flirted with him in the Subic bar where they met and that she later assumed a receptive position for them to consummate the sex act, given the van's cramped space.

In their testimony, Carpentier, Silkwood and Duplantis backed Smith's account.

Reluctant witness

The defense panel had wanted to call to the stand another witness, a woman from Subic, but she "was reluctant to testify because she didn't want to be in the limelight," Diaz said. The lawyer declined to name the purported witness.

The defense decided to rest its case after presenting Cpl. Justin Michael Bamberger (Nicole's friend who had communicated with her before and after the alleged incident) and Dr. Teresita Sanchez, an obstetrician-gynecologist.

Sanchez was recalled to the stand yesterday at Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139. She testified that Nicole had no injuries on her inner thighs and knees, as rape victims commonly sustained.

State Prosecutor Hazel Valdez asked Sanchez what she had based her statement on.

"I based my testimony on the overall medico-legal examination of the victim. There was evidence to show that she was susceptible to contusions because she sustained [bruises] with the grasping of her arms … Therefore, with any force, you should expect contusions on her inner thighs or knees because of the spreading of the legs," Sanchez said.

Not personally

The doctor also told the court that she did not personally examine the complainant.

"So you would have no basis to say [if] she is susceptible to bruises?" Judge Benjamin Pozon asked Sanchez.

Sanchez, however, stuck to her earlier testimony and said the medico-legal examination, conducted on Nicole 33 hours after the alleged rape, was basis enough for her to make such an opinion.

Valdez asked whether someone as drunk as Nicole purportedly was on the night of the incident could have resisted an attacker.

Sanchez said one who was very drunk would be in a stupor, hence, one could still respond to stimulus. The reflex, she said, would have been "to close the legs, rather than to open them."

In an interview after the hearing, Valdez said this statement was "contrary to human experience and behavior."

Valdez, however, got a decisive reply with this question: "Will you agree with me that evidence of external injury is not essential for the prosecution of rape … that it is possible for rape to have happened even in the absence of injuries [to the complainant]?"

"Yes, but it also depends on the circumstances," Sanchez said.

Sought for comment, Diaz said the possibility of rape despite the absence of external injuries could not apply in Nicole's case.

"There was no injury in the inner thighs, indicating that there was consensual sex," Diaz said.

After yesterday's hearing, there was one question on everyone's mind: Would Nicole get a second chance to tell her story in court after her very public rift with her government lawyers?

According to Senior State Prosecutor Emilie Fe de Los Santos, whose team Nicole had earlier berated for supposed incompetence, "we don't see any reason, as of today, to call her back."

De los Santos added that it would call for additional testimony from Nicole only "if it's vital."

At yesterday's hearing, the prosecution said it would call back two previous witnesses from the US Naval Criminal Investigative Service—agents Guy Papageorge and Tony Ramos. The court scheduled the rebuttal to start on Thursday next week.

Reasonable doubt

Off-court, De los Santos said Papageorge and Ramos would be asked about the claim made by accused Smith that they had "misquoted" him several times in the NCIS report on the purported rape, which now forms part of the court records.

Smith and the other accused were interviewed by NCIS agents in the early hours of Nov. 3, 2005, just over 24 hours after the alleged crime, on board the Marines' ship, the USS Essex.

Asked what she thought of the entire defense evidence, De los Santos said the four Marines "gave conflicting statements against each other."

However, Silkwood's counsel, Justiniano, said: "We have created reasonable doubt, and if there's reasonable doubt, then the court has a duty to acquit."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez stood pat on his decision not to replace the public prosecutors handling Nicole's case.

Dropping the public prosecutors at this point was unwise and would only delay the proceedings beyond the one-year prescription period, he said.

"The more we keep on changing, the more chances of delay there will be. And I think we're in a hurry to finish this case before the limit set forth in the Visiting Forces Agreement will be staring us in our faces," Gonzalez told reporters at the Senate yesterday.

He said he had granted the earlier request of the victim's family to allow the private prosecutor to argue the case but there was no way he would grant the new request to drop the public prosecutors.

Another agenda

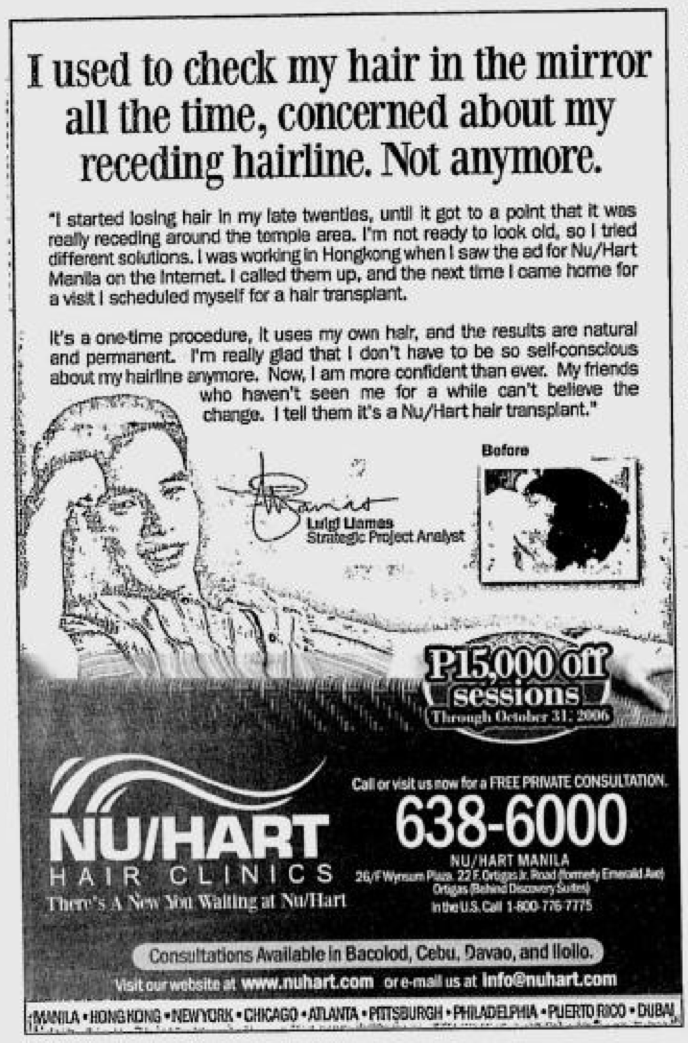
"I will not remove that panel. I've given them enough favors, I think, by allowing the private prosecutor to handle the case. What else do they want?" he said.

Nicole had sought the replacement of four of the five public prosecutors because she was "extremely disappointed" with Nolibien Quiambao's cross-examination of her alleged rapist, Smith.

Her mother had also claimed that De los Santos had broached a settlement with the Marines as early as July, or their case could end up being traded off with the case of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante.

Bolante, the alleged mastermind of the P728-million fertilizer fund scam, is being held in the United States for violation of immigration laws.

"I'm asking the NBI to investigate the particular aspect about the charge that Bolante was being used … The injection of Bolante's name in this case was an attempt to involve Malacañang because Bolante is a total stranger in this proceeding. It was never mentioned at all," Gonzalez said.



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Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

Pursuant to Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009), as amended, the public is hereby notified of the panel interview of the following applicants for the position of DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN FOR THE MILITARY at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2006
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 NOON
1. ALTAREJOS, Mateo B.
2. CALONGE, Diosdado V.
3. CARANDANG, Melchor Arthur H.
4. DATOR, Roque Damian A.
5. DE JESUS, Jose Tereso Jr. U.
6. DE LUNA, Ambrosio B.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2006
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
1. FALCIS, Rudiger II G.
2. FRANCISCO, Raymundo T.
3. HERNANDO, Ramon Paul L.
4. PAGUNSAN, Edward Harun V.
5. TURALBA, John IC.
6. YAP, Vicente L.

The five other applicants namely: APOSTOL, Pelagio S.; ELMAN, Rodolfo M.; GONZALEZ, Emilio II A.; KALLOS, Robert E.; LANTORIA, Gerardo Jr. B. were already interviewed by the JBC on June 16 & July 25, 2006.

The public may submit any sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants NOT LATER THAN THURSDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2006 to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. 552-9512 Fax No. 552-9598).

September 25, 2006.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI-Sept. 26, 2006)

Egg attack won't stop Esperon's …

From page A1

That much Esperon made clear yesterday as he vowed to return to the hotbed of student activism in the country, shrugging off Friday's incident in which UP students pelted him with eggs and mud.

The controversial military chief had another reason for being in high spirits.

In "one of the happiest moments in my life," Esperon yesterday took his oath as a four-star general before President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

"I'm not angry anymore," he told reporters after the Palace ceremony. "They pelted me with bad eggs. Maybe those who threw them were bad eggs, too."

The general said he still held UP in "high regard" since he obtained his master's degree in Business Administration there and three of his children graduated from the university.

"I will return to UP. I enjoyed UP," he said.

Esperon said he was also an activist during his student days, and that he actually joined the First Quarter Storm's violent student protests in early 1971.

"I have been through activism myself. I am a First Quarter Stormer so I can understand this. But, certainly, activism should not be equated with forgetting correct decorum," Esperon said.

Academic freedom

"I'm sorry to see that they're already graduating from college but it seems they still have a lot to learn about proper decorum," he went on.

Esperon had just finished speaking at a UP forum on "Development and Conflict" when the missiles flew.

Human rights groups have accused the military of involvement in the killing of hundreds of political activists since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001 and in the abduction of activists, including UP students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno.

Esperon said he accepted the invitation from forum organizers in the spirit of "academic freedom."

He said he appreciated the gesture of UP president Emerlinda Roman and other university officials who, he said, had called him up to apologize.

Esperon thanked Ms Arroyo for his latest star and expressed confidence that the Commission on Appointments (CA) would endorse him for his new position.

The post of AFP chief of staff is a four-star rank but the CA has only approved two stars for Esperon, bypassing his promotion to the next notch of three stars at its last hearing in June.

Thus, Esperon's appointment as AFP chief of staff is still considered to be interim, pending CA confirmation.

Not unique

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Esperon's case was not unique and cited the case of former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Lisandro Abadia, whose promotions to three-star and four-star general were simultaneously confirmed in one session by the CA in the early 1990s.

"That was the procedure followed by the CA at that time. Let's see what this present CA will do," Ermita told reporters.

Esperon said he was willing to go through the commission again even after the body had bypassed his earlier promotion.

"This is a feature of our democratic system which we will have to go through and I respect the wisdom of the CA," he said.

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9212	Water Meter ½" Ø for New Tapping	950,000.00	900.00	Sept. 25 to 29, 2006	Oct. 3, 2006	Oct. 17, 2006

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility Check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's and Manager's Check in the amount of One Percent (1%) of the Approved Budget Cost.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

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(PDI - Sept. 26, 2006)

Environmentalists score big win in House

By Blanche S. Rivera

ENVIRONMENTALISTS SCORED A MAJOR victory with the approval on third reading by the House of Representatives of the Renewable Energy bill that is designed to combat climate change and reduce the country's overdependence on imported oil.

The bill, which hurdled the House committee on energy on Sept. 19, promotes the use of clean and renewable indigenous sources of energy, resulting in lower carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions from power generation through fossil fuel.

The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines, a member of the renewable Energy Coalition actively campaigning for the passage of the bill, said the landmark legislation would benefit not only the Philippines but the entire planet as the adverse effects of climate change are increasingly being felt.

"This will help prevent dangerous climate change while enhancing the country's energy security through renewable energy sources like wind, geothermal, biomass, solar and hydropower," WWF Climate and Energy Program head Raf Senga said in a statement.

A University of the Philippines study commissioned by the WWF-Philippines estimated that the country could save up to $2.9 billion from importing less fossil fuel such as coal and oil if the government increases the share of indigenous renewable energy in power generation mix to 41 percent.

Less than one percent of the entire energy needs of the Philippines are currently sourced from renewable sources such as wind, sun and modern biomass.

The Renewable Energy Bill offers fiscal and non-fiscal incentives such as zero value added tax and priority dispatch for wind power and other projects that use renewable indigenous energy sources to promote the use of cleaner energy sources.

The passage of the bill in the Lower House came as a new study by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) composed of some 1,500 companies, organizations and institutions in over 50 countries, confirmed the Philippines' vast wind power potential.

The "Global Wind Energy Outlook 2006" launched in Australia by the GWEC and Greenpeace said the Philippines had the highest wind energy potential in Southeast Asia.

"The report firmly places wind power as one of the world's most important energy sources for the 21st century. The Philippines has the potential to become a leading player in this field," Greenpeace Southeast Asia Climate and Energy campaigner Jasper Inventor said in a separate statement.

The US-based National Renewable Energy Laboratory has placed the Philippines' wind energy potential at 70,000-MW, which is enough to meet the country's current energy demand seven times over, according to Greenpeace.

The Renewable Energy Coalition, which kicked off its campaign multi-sectoral campaign for the Renewable energy bill last year, has gathered 300,000 signatures from concerned individuals worldwide for its Positibong Alternatibo ang Renewable Energy (P.A.R.E. ni Juan) signature campaign.

PNP asks DOJ to reopen case of Tamano's killing

By Armand N. Nocum

THE POLICE HAS RECOMMENDED THE REopening of the murder case against a former Lanao mayor and five of his men for the killing of 1st Lt. Sadat Hofer Tamano—the "goat" of the PMA class of 1998—and his aide Pfc. Nabral Bara in Cagayan de Oro on Dec. 11, 2005.

In a report to Senior State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño of the Department of Justice, lawyer Guillermo G. Danipog Jr. of the legal affairs division of the Philippine National Police Intelligence Group (PNPI) said they have unearthed new evidence that would link former Kapai, Lanao del Sur Mayor Aminolah Mangurun and five of his men to the killing.

Danipog submitted to Zuño "pieces of evidence that would sufficiently establish the complicity (of the accused) and hereby respectfully moves for the reopening of this case in the interest of justice."

The new evidence include affidavits from witnesses, reports on the firearms used and their identification numbers, cartographic sketch of the suspects, and photos of the get-away vehicle, among others.

Danipog also asked that a certain Aslia Capal Mangurum, "owner of the get-away vehicle used in the commission of the crime, be charged as among the co-conspirators."

Those earlier charged for the murder were the former mayor, Lininging Ampal, Bokary Calauto Ampal, Fahad Ambo, Col. Dilimpinas Dagalangit and several John Does.

Senior State Prosecutor Leo B. Dacera had recommended the dismissal of the case for "insufficiency of evidence" and referred the matter back to the PNP to "conduct methodical and scrupulous investigation of this case."

Tamano, 29, then with the Army's 4th Military Intelligence Battalion (4MIB), 4th Infantry Division, was killed by gunmen on board a Nissan Frontier pickup which overtook Tamano's Toyota Hilux.

Tamano and Bara sustained multiple gunshot wounds and died on the spot.

The family of Tamano later brought double murder charges before the City Prosecutor of Cagayan de Oro against Mangurun.

The complaint said Mangurun, in a fit of jealousy had Tamano murdered, suspecting he had an affair with his wife Rachma, the incumbent Kapai mayor. She was a childhood friend of the Tamano children.

But Shalimar Hofer Tamano, brother of Sadat and a director for special concerns of the Department of Tourism, denied the "love affair" angle, saying Mangurun was just trying to provoke a "rido"—a bloody ritual of vengeance exacted for perceived insult or hurt.

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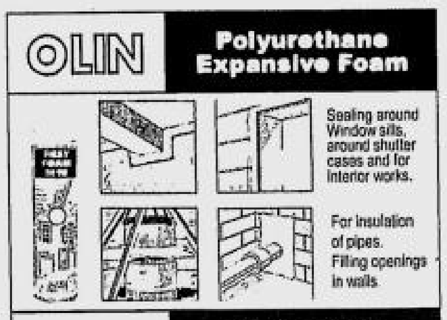

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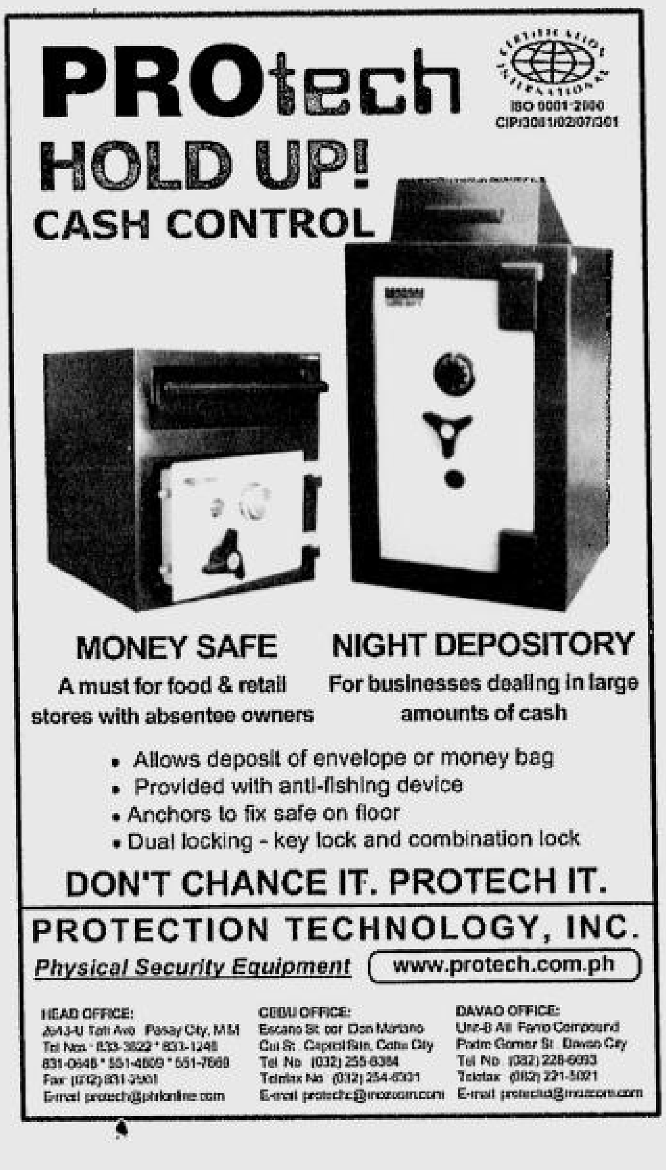

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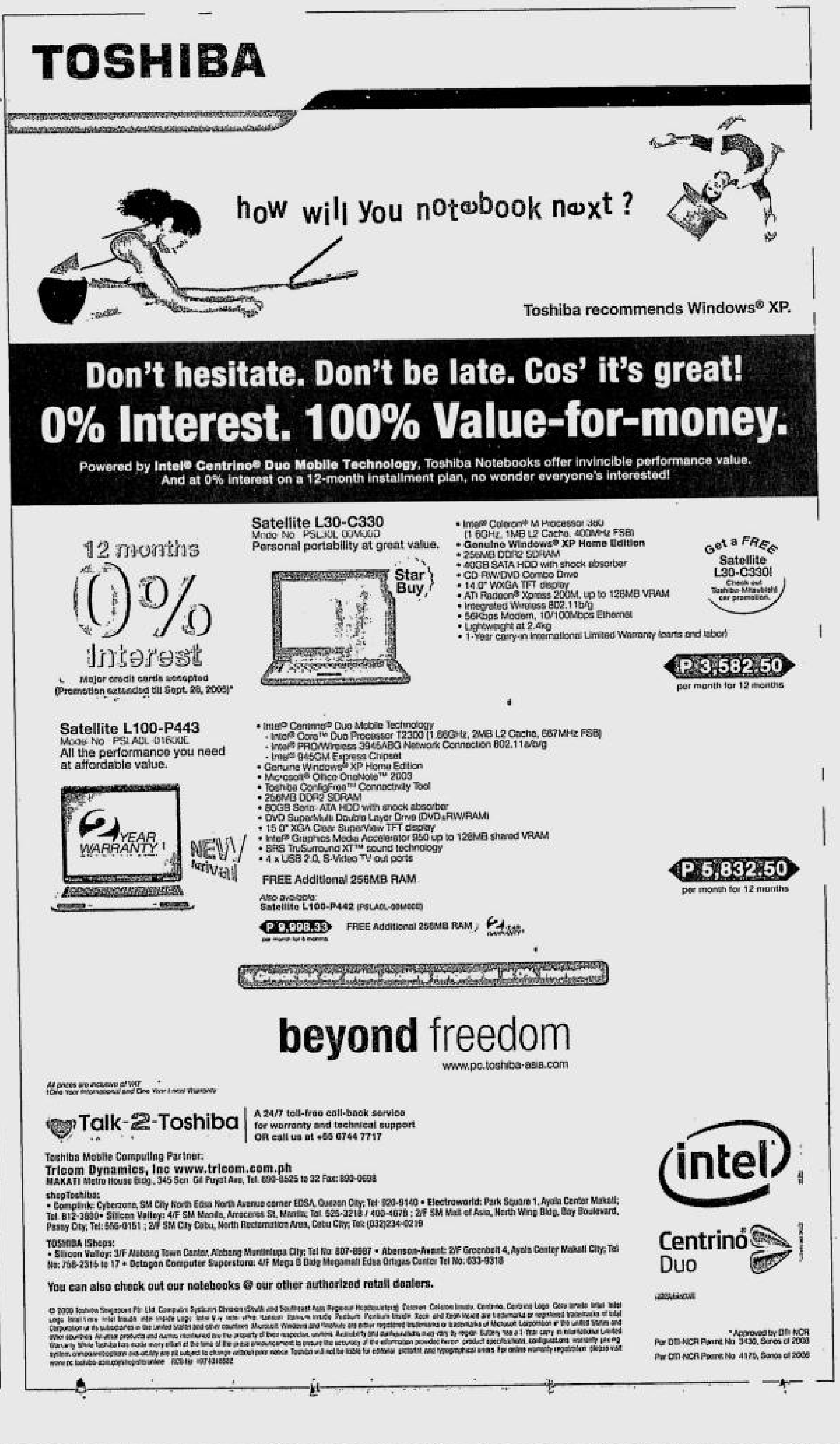

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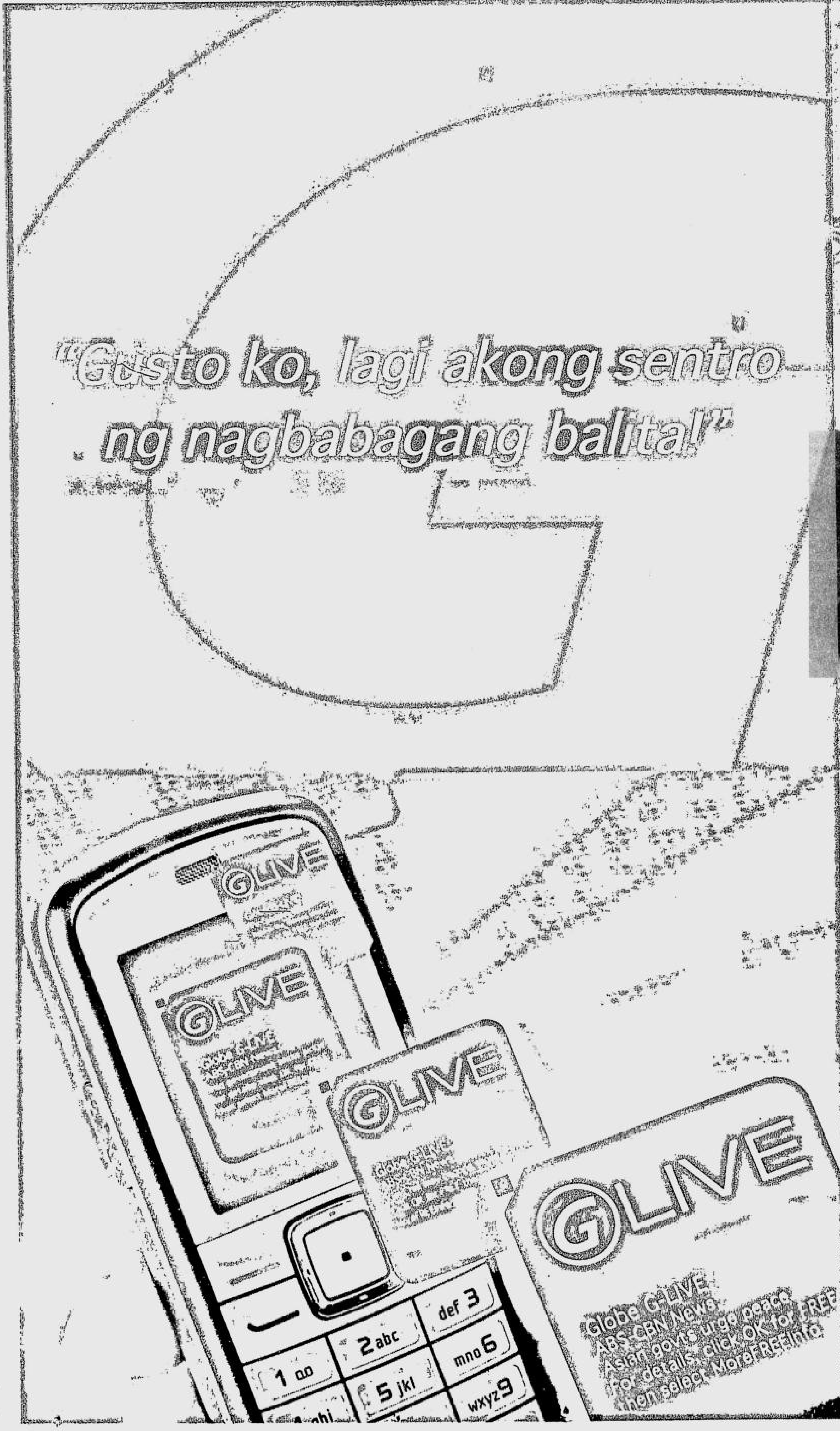
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OPINION

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De-commissioning

EDITORIAL

THE DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT TO SUSpend the warrants of arrest issued by the Senate against the top officials of the Presidential Commission on Good Government last week did not come as a surprise. In fact, it seemed only the prudent thing to do.

Prudent, and predictable. The Senate even seemed to have anticipated the suspension, allowing PCGG Chairman Camilo Sabio to return home before his habeas corpus hearing at the high court, without benefit of a Senate guard. His release could be read as a tacit acknowledgement by the Senate that the Court would favor suspension—and also as a tactical way for senators to save precious face.

And so it turned out. When the Court issued its decision, there was no one languishing in the senators' detention facility to embarrass the Senate.

A photograph published last week, showing the PCGG commissioners in various stages of prayer during a thanksgiving Mass held to celebrate their return to the agency, makes the relief the commissioners felt almost palpable. Their relief is certainly understandable, and not at all unsympathetic.

It is, however, merely temporary. The commissioners read the law wrong; they are advancing a dubious right. Their choice places them on the wrong side of history.

Any law must be understood in its proper context. To discuss the provisions of Executive Order No. 1, which created the PCGG in 1986, without regard for the revolutionary character of the issuing authority, is to mislead one's self and the public. But that is exactly what Sabio and his fellow commissioners have chosen to do.

To espouse the immunity offered in the EO, without the slightest acknowledgement that previous commissioners had not, in fact, enjoyed that immunity, is to live in an imaginary world of one's own making. But that is exactly where Sabio and his fellow commissioners reside.

Twenty years after it was created, the PCGG has suffered the fate history reserves for individuals and institutions that have outlived their usefulness: It has forgotten what it was originally about. The fight Sabio and his fellow commissioners have chosen to pick does not, in fact, empower them to recover the ill-gotten wealth accumulated and then hidden away by the Marcoses and their cronies. Instead, the legal issue they have chosen to stake their legacy on is lack of accountability—the very disease that corrupted the republic in Marcos' time and created the need for the PCGG in the first place.

In other words, the commissioners have not only read the law wrong; they are using their erroneous interpretation to advance a dubious and non-existent right. Non-existent, because the Constitution of 1987 effectively changed the context of the EO. Dubious, because the claim is fundamentally undemocratic.

If the commissioners' assertion is taken at face value, then they cannot be held accountable for any of their actions. The very notion is anathema to a working democracy.

We look to the Supreme Court to place the necessary emphasis, once again, on the essential principle that governs all public service: It is a public trust.

Resurrection

FOREIGN COMMENT

AFTER ANNOUNCING THAT HE WAS "A GAY AMERICAN" AND resigning as governor in August 2004, then virtually disappearing from the public eye, Jim McGreevey's resurrection has begun. His book as he spins it, and this is a man who never stops spinning—is "painfully honest." It's called "The Confession" and reportedly details the former governor's struggle with his homosexuality, his Catholic upbringing and his political ambition.

But the McGreevey story—the real story, at least as far as New Jersey taxpayers and voters should be concerned—isn't really about his homosexuality. It's about incompetence and corruption, with a good measure of arrogance thrown in.

McGreevey didn't have to resign from office because he is gay. He put his lover on the state payroll, in an anti-terrorism job the man was patently unqualified for. Then, when that proved untenable, McGreevey gave the man a different job as an aide with undefined responsibilities—at $110,000 a year.

The man was incapable of giving a straight answer about anything. And now he's going to be "painfully honest"?

Frankly, who cares?

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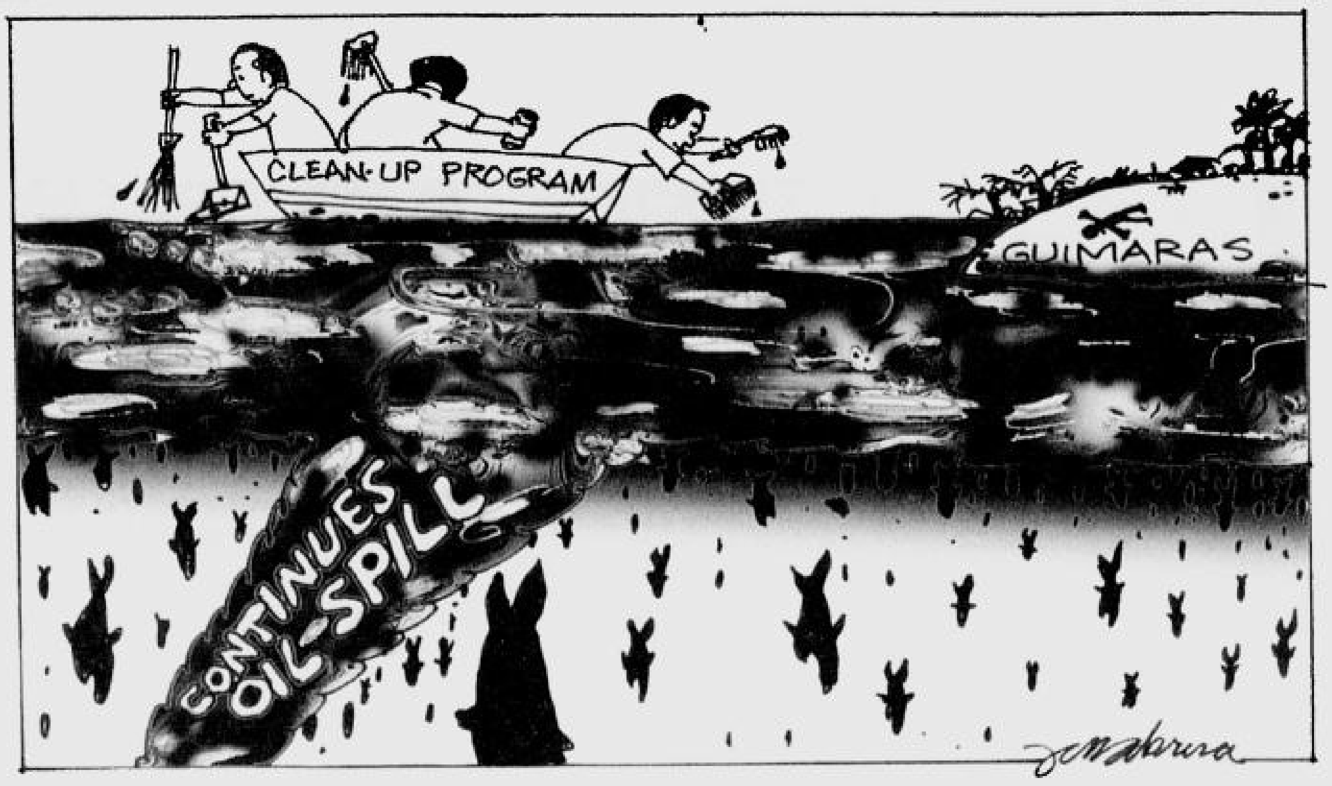

Is more really merrier?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

NOT WHEN YOU'RE FINANCIALLY STRAPPED while kids eat you out of bed, board and breakfast, says a new analysis of data from 74 Philippine provinces.

"A young population matters," asserts the new Asia Pacific Policy Center study, "Population-Growth-Poverty Nexus: Evidence from the Philippines." And "more is not necessarily merrier."

Dennis Mapa, research director of the University of the Philippines School of Statistics, sifts through provincial data from 1985 to 2003 to pinpoint what boosts—or crimps—incomes.

In this 18-year period, most *probinsyanos* found their incomes increased, on average, a piddling 1.8 percent. It'll "take about 38 years before average (real) income per person doubles," the study says. "Most people will not experience doubling of real income in their lifetime."

Some provinces posted more than 5 percent growth. But "majority have income growth comparable with the world's poorest countries."

In 2004, Mapa and UP School of Economics' Arsenio Balisacan examined incomes in 80 countries. Between 1975 and 2000, they found, the paths of "Asean's development twins"—Thailand and the Philippines—steadily diverged. In 1975, the Philippines population was 43 million, slightly larger than Thailand's 41 million. Their economies muddled in tandem at 2.5 percent plus yearly. Head-for-head, Philippine gross domestic product then was almost twice Thailand's $805. But over the next 25 years, Filipino incomes grew only 2.6 times—"cadaverous when compared to Thailand's eight times," noted Mapa.

(By 2010, Filipino per head income would top $1,800, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda says. That is still below what Thailand achieved in 2004: $2,490. And Vietnam may have overtaken us by then.)

This income gap affects the daily lives of Thais and Filipinos. Out of every 100 Filipinos, 46 scrape below the $2-a-day poverty line, the UN Human Development Report reveals. It's 36 for Thais.

One reason is Thailand's on-going "demographic transition," the process where fewer births and fewer deaths result in slower population growth. Japan completed its "demographic transition." It is on-going in Indonesia and Vietnam. That held down Thailand's population to 63.1 million by mid-2003.

In contrast, the "demographic transition" never got off the starting block here. "No province here has undergone demographic transition," notes the Population Center Foundation-backed study. So, Philippine population topped 81.6 million in 2003 (and is 86.3 million today).

Transitions offer "demographic dividends," which Thailand cashed. Out of every 100 students who enroll, 94 Thais reach Grade 5; only 76 Filipinos do. Skilled health personnel attend 99 percent of Thai child births compared to 60 percent here. Out of every 1000 cell phone users, 394 were Thais and 270 Filipinos.

Had the Philippines followed Thailand's population growth path, Mapa and Balisacan estimated that 4.03 million Filipinos would have broken free of the poverty treadmill. "This should be enough to get serious about the relationship between population and development."

In the current study, the earlier econometric model gauges the impact of population on income in 74 provinces, head counts and household poverty. The 74 stretched from Abra, in the north, to three Davaos in the south, Antique in the west to Samar in the east.

Focus of analysis were young dependents (14 years and below) with their heavy call on resources. In our provinces, 41 percent were youngsters compared to Thailand's 35 percent. The model crunched other "variables" ranging from schooling, electricity to migration, agrarian reform and typhoons.

Among 10 provinces with the fewest dependents were Cavite, Siquijor, Bulacan and Camiguin. They were used as a yardstick to determine "what could have been the income growth picture" with fewer dependents. Some findings:

—Slicing a percentage point from dependents reduces demand on resources, and jacks up provincial per head income by 7.5 percent. *Probinsyano* incomes would have risen from P27,443 to P29,063. "This would mean an increase of 6 percent in national average per capita income."

—Camarines Norte and Sur, as well as Davao Oriental, had large clusters of young dependents. If these three had fewer dependents, Camarines Norte's income would have been P3,297 higher, Camarines Sur's P2,764 more, and Davao Orientals P2,152 more.

—A comparison between Mindoro Occidental and Camarines Norte reveals that "about 48 percent of their growth differential" pivoted around differences in numbers of dependents.

—"Under the status quo … the poverty head count in 2003 was estimated at 20.4 million Filipinos. This is over a quarter of the total population."

The low dependents yardstick, however, would increase per head income by P2,227. This would slash the poverty head count down to 17.6 million. And 2.82 million individuals would be better off—"surely a large number that merits serious consideration."

"Population is not the only reason for the poor performance of a majority of provinces," Mapa wrote. But the tests run by the econometric model show the dependence burden is "a robust determinant" of income growth.

The 2004 cross-country analysis concluded that "the Philippines pays a high price for its unchecked population growth," Mapa said. That is reiterated in the 2006 within-country study.

The call is for a clear population policy backed by strong government support. "Young population matters. And contrary to the cliché, more is not necessarily merrier."

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Death goes on

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WANTED TO WRITE ABOUT THE MURDER OF Pablo Glean last week. Glean, Jejomar Binay's close-in security for the last couple of decades, was gunned down the other Saturday as he and some friends drank coffee at a Shell station in Fort Bonifacio preparatory to motor-biking to Tagaytay. I didn't know if the killing was politically or criminally motivated. All my instincts told me it was a political killing, but I decided that prudence was the better part of outrage and waited last week for some sudden revelation that Glean was bumped off by partners or clients he had pissed off. Glean was also at one point in charge of giving business permits in Makati, a job that naturally spawned enemies.

None came, though the authorities have lately been making noises to that effect, largely by way of speculation, or indeed suggestion. Presumably, Glean was gunned down by people he had ripped off during the aborted Feb. 25 "withdrawal of support" by military officers. Presumably, he had gotten money but failed to deliver on his promises. That tack carries with it the added suggestion that Binay himself was involved in the military officers' "withdrawal of support" or what Raul Gonzalez irascibly calls coup attempt.

Which adds insult to injury, or injury to injury, this government no longer limiting to insult what it can accomplish by injury. Already hurting from the death of a friend—the copious tears Binay shed on TV looked completely spontaneous and genuine; he had lost a close friend, he said, one who on more than one occasion had saved his life—Binay now has to reckon as well with the prospect of hurting in quite a literal sense. Or not hurting at all, if he should be sent to a place past hurting.

As things stand today, this looks every inch like a political killing. And the astonishing thing is why it has not met with more furious condemnation from media, the NGOs, and the public. Because if this is a political killing, then it ups the ante on the killings that have been taking place in this country on an already mind-boggling scale. It adds whole new dimensions to them, which bodes ill not just for the health of democracy, or what little is left of it today, but for the health of living, breathing, human beings who happen to detest a rule by rulers the voters did not vote for.

At the very least, the killing of Glean brings the escalating mayhem right at the doorstep of Metro Manila. Or never mind doorstep, right at the heart, or pit, of Metro Manila. You can't get any more at the center of Metro Manila than the Fort. It is not a place you associate with mayhem, other than the aesthetic kind, or the kind the youth like to inflict on themselves. So far the killings of both journalists and political activists, notably of Bayan Muna, have been taking place outside of Metro Manila. Yes, even the killings of activists. Now and then, you have an activist killed, or abducted, in the fringes of Metro Manila, but never at the heart of it. And never in this brazen, high-profile, way.

The reason for this is not that fascist governments have a superstitious respect for the capital. The [illegible] that not even a fascist government wants to draw international attention to something like this. A killing of a journalist or party-list representative in Metro Manila (Gen. Hermogenes Esperon was openly suggesting to the Melo Commission there was no great distinction between communists and party-list representatives; he backtracked only when he was grilled on that point) would open the floodgates to international scorn and crippling sanctions from the US. As it is, the international journalist and human rights communities have already issued worldwide alerts against the killings in the Philippines. And as GMA found out in her latest sortie abroad, where she was haunted by the ghosts of the dead wherever she went, you can become an international pariah for it.

But there's always a first time, and I've always thought that if any first was going to happen in this respect, which is bringing the killings to Metro Manila, it was going to happen under GMA's watch. Or lack of it. This one knows no limits, this one knows no bounds.

At the very most, the killing of Glean brings the escalating mayhem right at the doorstep of the "opposition," by which I mean not just the political figures opposed to the administration but everyone critical of GMA. I was about to say it graduates the killings on to political figures but I don't know that political figures, even those based in Metro Manila, are more important than journalists, even those based in the provinces. I've always thought the opposite was true.

Glean, of course, is not himself an opposition figure, but he is an alter ego of an opposition figure who is Binay. Binay's camp is at least convinced, and for very good reason, that the murder of Glean is meant to put the fear of God or government, whichever comes in more smiting mode, in the mayor of Makati. As an official of that camp told me recently, the message is: "If we can do that to your security officer, we can do that to you." Particularly with the current tack of implicating Binay in the "withdrawal of support" or coup, pick your poison, that is no idle threat.

And if that can happen to Binay, that can happen to anyone.

I've been saying it again and again: We do not rise to stop the killings even now, they will get worse. We do not rage against the dying of the light because it is somebody else's light and not our own, we will wake up one day to hear the snuffers of light loudly knocking at our door. Enough with that stupidity about forgetting iniquity and *kawalanghiyaan*, let's move on, life goes on. Life does not go on with iniquity and *kawalanghiyaan*.

Death does.

Crucial arguments before SC

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TODAY IS A CRUCIAL DAY FOR CHARTER change, as both sides in the issue of people's initiative give their oral arguments before the Supreme Court. Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura and retired Justice Bernardo Pardo will argue for the local government executives and Sigaw ng Bayan, respectively, assisted by Sigaw advocate Raul Lambino and other lawyers. Leading the opposite side will be Sen. Joker Arroyo and lawyer Koko Pimentel, representing the Senate and the minority, respectively.

The arguments for a parliamentary/unicameral system, the main issue proposed to be submitted in a referendum by people's initiative, can be summed up in a few sentences: We've tried the presidential system and it has not worked for us in the past 60 years. Abolishing the Senate would save us P1.6 billion a year, which does not include the savings of P200 million in pork barrel allocations for each of the 24 senators. Having two chambers is like having two boards of directors, which makes legislation too cumbersome and too slow in this global age. Proof is that so many crucial bills languish in the Senate. The latest is a bill passed by the House, seeking to implement English as medium of instruction from Grade 3 upwards in order to make Filipinos more globally competitive. The senators have resolutely blocked the convening of a constituent assembly, and our only hope to effect these reforms is through people's initiative. We repose our trust in the Supreme Court's wisdom.

* * *

Earlier I wrote about descendants of Filipino sugar plantation workers, who made good in Hawaii politics, most notably former Gov. Benjamin Cayetano. There are also many later-day immigrants who made a name in education. Dr. Ruth Mabanglo and Dr. Teresita Ramos (the latter is the half-sister of well-known New York-based Filipino writer Ninotchska Rosca) work with the Department of Indo-Pacific Languages of the University of Hawaii, where they seek to arouse interest in Filipino as well as various languages of Pacific countries. There's also Amefil Agbayani, who's credited with getting federal scholarships for many Filipino descendants.

I met Cecile Alvarez's classmate at St. Paul's College Manila, Mila Donato-Gavieres of Aparri, who taught for a long time at a big public high school in a Pinoy neighborhood in Honolulu, after doing graduate studies at the University of Hawaii. I also met professionals such as Edna Alikpala, who is with the Honolulu city government, and Nelson Befitel, a *sakada* descendant, who serves as labor secretary in Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle's cabinet.

* * *

Also among the prominent Filipinos in Hawaii is Ephraim "Eddie" Jose, the fourth of seven children of National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose and wife Tessie. Eddie works as conservator for Asian paintings at the Honolulu Academy of Arts, one of only 50 in this profession around the world. After training under a Japanese *sensei* in Asian conservation work from the late '70s to 1991, Eddie then put up his own successful company in Alameda County outside San Francisco, employing Japanese, Chinese and other Oriental technicians. The work involved servicing the conservation needs of various museums around the world, which he found most satisfying and financially rewarding; but after 10 years he felt burned out. When the offer from the Honolulu Academy came two years ago, he grabbed it and moved his wife, Lulu, and young daughters Tess and Isabel to Hawaii.

* * *

The Honolulu Academy was perfect for him. Founded in 1927 by Anne Rice Cooke, who wanted to popularize the arts there, its core collection came from an incredible donation of about 20,000 art pieces collected over the years by Richard Lane, an American intelligence officer in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's postwar staff in Tokyo. With an enviable $70 million endowment fund, it's the only major museum in North America with a Philippine gallery. The core of that section was donated by Jovy Rodas-Zimmerman, whose husband Carl was a longtime bureau chief of the Associated Press in Manila. The academy also boasts of the largest Korean celadon collection outside Korea.

In addition to his conservation work, Eddie Jose spends two weeks each January teaching Asian art appreciation to Asian students at the Sorbonne in Paris. Eddie, 50, feels very strongly about elevating Filipino racial pride in Hawaii. In fact he's working on a project to bring to Honolulu in 2008 paintings by Filipino neo-classical painters Juan Luna and Felix Hidalgo, "to show the world that we Filipinos have a rich cultural heritage and that we can be good at anything, be it the tourism service industry or the arts."

Frankie and Tessie have every reason to be proud of their son.

* * *

My Carmelite friends in Gilmore St., Quezon City want to reach devotees of St. Therese of Lisieux, a.k.a. "The Little Flower of Jesus," for their annual Triduum Masses for her feast day on Oct. 1. They said that considering the continuing threats of terrorism and the unfortunate misunderstanding of Pope Benedict XVI's plea for peace and dialogue in the world, this year's Triduum seeks to reawaken people's faith in "God's unconditional and merciful love for all peoples of all religions and cultures."

Following is the schedule of the Masses and the celebrant/homilist: Friday, Sept. 29, Fr. Gerry Orbos, SVD; Saturday, Sept. 30 (the actual day of the Saint's death), Most Rev. Rolando Tirona, CCD; singing will be the St. Paul de Chartres Sisters' choir; and Sunday, Oct. 1, Papal Nuncio Antonio Filoni, D.D., with the San Jose Seminary choir. All the Masses will be at 6 p.m., although there will still be the regular 6:30 a.m. Mass. Veneration of the saint's relics and blessing of the roses will be done after the Mass. The Carmelites also have a message for all archdiocesan campus ministers: Pick up your invitation and your booklet from Msgr. Vicente Bauzon.

Vaccines for adults

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DO YOU STILL REMEMBER THOSE DAYS IN grade school, when we were all herded to the clinic or the covered court to take our vaccination shots? As we lined up before the doctor or nurse, clutching in our clammy hands the consent forms signed by our parents, we traded horror stories about vaccination scars and running a fever afterwards, though the last didn't seem like such a bad thing if it meant having an excuse to stay home and miss school.

As young parents, we also gladly followed the vaccination regimen imposed by our pediatricians for our newborns, religiously keeping track of the schedule in those pamphlets handed us before we left the hospital. Years later, filling out the health forms for my children during enrolment time, I guiltily checked the "yes" boxes for the basic childhood "shots," though I couldn't remember exactly which of them my children had taken, and when. Sometimes, parenthood can be such a crap shoot!

These days, though, my mind is filled not with DPT or BCG or measles shots—the staples of childhood vaccination—but with what's known as "adult vaccination," injections adults need to take against basic diseases like flu and pneumonia and the far more serious Hepatitis B. Coming soon (I hope) is the anti-HPV vaccine, though this time it may prove much more useful for our daughters as it may no longer be as effective for uhmm, women of a certain age.

I'd never given a thought to adult vaccines until my husband and I became diabetics. Which also means that we are now "immuno-compromised," that is, our bodies' ability to fight infection has been weakened by the disease. Diabetes makes us vulnerable to infections and worse, makes it difficult for our immune system to fight and get rid of infections, so that a "simple" cold or flu, for instance, could escalate into a serious illness.

A drawn-out bout with bronchitis recently drove home the point for me. Where before I would need only rest and plenty of fluids to fight off the malaise, this time, the fatigue, fever, coughing and chest pain escalated speedily and it took me about two weeks to get back on my feet.

* * *

THIS was when I began giving serious thought **to adult vaccines, as it was obvious both age and diabetes had dealt me a double whammy and I would need all the help I could get to protect myself.**

Fortunately, FriendlyCare Foundation, on whose board of trustees I sit, recently came out with a Health Education Newsletter on adult vaccinations, which contains practically everything every adult should know about the "shots" one needs to stay healthy in these trying times. But, of course, before deciding to go for these shots, it would be best to consult your doctor or health clinic first.

The flu vaccine, for instance, needs to be given to adults every year before the flu season (the ideal time to have the shots, I'm told, is around January or February), though if one is traveling to the northern hemisphere where another strain of the virus is predominant, one would need another variant of the flu shot around this time of the year.

By no means does the vaccine provide foolproof protection against the virus, "some people who get the vaccine will still get the flu, but they will usually get a milder case than people who aren't vaccinated." One is protected against the virus within two weeks after injection. The FriendlyCare handouts say the vaccine is highly recommended "for people who are at high risk of having serious flu complications or people who live with or care for those at high risk for serious complications." The flu shot is available at FriendlyCare for P980.

* * *

PNEUMONIA is a far more serious ailment than flu, an infection in the lungs caused by either a virus or bacteria that has been linked to the deaths of some 50,000 people a year. The estimate is that half of those deaths could have been prevented with a pneumonia vaccine. Pneumonia mimics many of the symptoms of the flu, like fever, cough, headache and muscle pain, but will also be accompanied by chest pain, chills, excessive sweating, rapid heartbeat, sore throat and difficulty in breathing.

The pneumonia vaccine is recommended for people age 65 or older but also for those with serious chronic illnesses, the immuno-compromised, caregivers of high-risk patients, and those wishing to lessen their chances of getting pneumonia.

The good news is that the pneumonia vaccine needs to be given only once—or maybe twice—in a lifetime. If you got a pneumonia shot in your younger years, you should get a booster shot before you turn 65, with a five-year interval between the initial shot and the booster dose. At FriendlyCare, a shot of the pneumococcal vaccine costs P1,400.

* * *

ONE of the most welcome developments in the field of immunology is the development of a vaccine against Hepatitis-B, which is considered a serious global health problem, infecting about two billion people worldwide and burdening more than 350 million with chronic infections, which in turn place them at high risk of developing liver disease.

Hepatitis-B or HBV is transmitted by blood and is highly infectious, considered 50 to 100 times more infectious than the HIV. Transmission may occur during birth from an HBV-infected mother, through sexual contact, through injections or injuries with contaminated material, and transfusion of contaminated blood.

The vaccination schedule for both adults and children consists of three injections, with the second injection given one month after the first, and the third injection given six months after the first. A booster dose is not generally recommended except for the immune compromised. At FriendlyCare, the three shots are available for P2,100.

Islamicizing Malaysia

WORLD VIEW

Maznah Mohamad

MALAYSIAN SOCIETY IS NOW GRIPPED BY A fundamental question: Is the country, which is more than half Muslim, an Islamic state? In practice, various religious and ethnic groups give Malaysia a distinctly multi-cultural character. But the Malaysian constitution provides room for arguments on both sides of the question, and the relatively secular status quo is facing a serious challenge.

Drafted by a group of experts in 1957, under the auspices of the country's former British rulers, the constitution includes two seemingly contradictory clauses. On the one hand, Article 3 states that Islam is the religion of the federation, and that only Islam can be preached to Muslims. On the other hand, Article 11 guarantees freedom of religion for all. As a result, Malaysia has developed both a general civil code, which is applied universally, and Islamic law, which is applied only to Muslims in personal and family matters.

Recently, however, some Muslim groups have pressed the government to proclaim Malaysia an Islamic state, on the basis of Article 3 and the Muslims' population majority. Ultimately, they would like Malaysia to be governed by Islamic law.

For years, there was little need to resolve this constitutional issue. For example, if a Muslim decided to renounce his faith, the matter would be handled outside the legal system, or conversion records would be sealed. Today, however, every Malaysian must declare a religious affiliation, which is registered with the government—a requirement that has made it difficult for a Muslim to leave Islam without formalizing the change of status through the legal process.

The country is now riveted on the fate of ordinary citizens like sales assistant Lina Joy and former religious teacher Kamariah Ali, who are trying to change their religious affiliation through the legal system. Muslim professional organizations and the Islamic opposition political party hold the view that renunciation of Islam is punishable by death. Likewise, the defense by Malaysian civil reform movements of individuals' freedom of conscience has been denounced by some religious leaders as an attack on Islam.

At present, Malaysia has no law that would impose the death penalty on apostates. Yet public movements have been formed to highlight this Islamic tenet. If it is not applied, the argument goes, there will be a massive exodus of Muslims to other faiths. The immediate goal is to keep the courts from allowing Lina Joy or Kamariah Ali to convert.

Attempts by other democratic civil society groups to debate this issue in peaceful public forums have been thwarted by threats of violence from a coalition of Muslim non-governmental organizations calling themselves BADAI (the Malay acronym for Coalition against the Inter-Faith Commission). Concerned about sparking an ethnic clash, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has proclaimed a ban on open discussion of these issues, threatening to arrest Internet news providers and activists if they continue to fan such debates.

Badawi is right to be worried. Since independence, national politics in Malaysia has reinforced group identity, especially among ethnic Malays, an exclusively Muslim community. Identity politics allowed ethnic Malays to assert their claims to control over land, language and religion. All attempts to reduce Malay influence serve to mobilize this community—in both ethnic and religious terms. Malay politicians have learned how to play this card very effectively.

Ethnic Malays' special status has long been codified in affirmative action policies giving them special economic benefits. However, as Malaysia engages with the global economy, these privileges may eventually be removed in order to heighten the country's competitiveness. As a result, many Malay Muslims increasingly worry about the loss of familiar economic and political safeguards. In particular, tensions have grown between the Malay majority and the country's large Chinese minority, which has been quicker to benefit from Malaysia's economic opening to the world.

Moreover, efforts to Islamicize the state comes at a time when conflict in the Middle East has further politicized Muslim movements in Malaysia. They view themselves as counter-forces to cultural domination by the West, asserting their religious identity in the face of what they regard as imperializing ideas like secularism and human rights.

Small disputes are magnified by this underlying conflict. Disagreements are increasingly depicted as being rooted in an East-West divide, as a struggle between believers and apostates.

Many Muslims are wary of this brand of identity politics. They recognize that the intolerance of Islamist groups can easily be turned against moderate Muslims. But all Malaysians must learn how to manage pressures that seem to be pushing their country's constituent communities away from one another. Defending a multi-cultural national identity in the face of religious intolerance is thus the great challenge facing Malaysia's state and society.

Project Syndicate

Maznah Mohamad is deputy dean of graduate studies at the School of Social Sciences of Saints University Malaysia.

Labyrinth

YOUNG BLOOD

Vida Soraya Verzosa

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

MY FRIEND, REI MON "RAMBO" GURAN, WAS KILLED last July 31, 2006. He was shot to death by armed men aboard a bus in Sorsogon the day after his birthday. He was a student leader who spoke out against injustices not just in his home province but even as a freshman at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Twenty years earlier, another man, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., was shot on the tarmac of the Manila International Airport, his death sparked a peaceful, so-called bloodless revolution that has become the stuff that legends and democratic exercises are made of.

While my mind is spinning with thoughts of how the blindfolded Themis, goddess of law and justice, should tilt her scale and wield her sword regarding the unjustified deaths of Rambo and Ninoy as well as other victims of extrajudicial killings and wondering about the state of the nation and the correlations of events, I am also wondering how to motivate myself to study amid these thoughts. As the clock ticks a 27-hour countdown to my Constitutional Law exam, my brain transforms into a labyrinth of procrastination, with my inability to focus on thick books and cases. Still, I can't help but get lost in the numerous, winding passageways littered with the remains of other thoughts.

These other thoughts include what to do with my hair, which has grown to an almost "goddessly" length (although on mornings when I'm too lazy to comb, it resembles Medusa's snakes, sans the scales). An aunt suggested that I sell it to research laboratories to help defray my exorbitant tuition fee. Another friend suggested we shoot a short film while cutting it, in true cinematic Pinoy indie fashion. A cousin mentioned donating it to Locks for Love to be turned into wigs for kids stricken with cancer. Then, I read somewhere that human hair is effective in mopping up oil spills and, as if in fulfillment of a Delphic oracle's prophecy, a bunker fuel tanker sank off the coast of Guimaras a few weeks later. Now, it has become a question of exchanging $500 worth of virgin hair for a chance to help alleviate one of the worst environmental disasters in our country. Where, then, should I send my hair? Would it really make a difference in cleaning up the mess created by the biggest petroleum refinery in the Philippines?

Another chamber in my mental labyrinth is filled with my constantly growing anxiety over each day at my new school, which employs a modified Socratic method that brings out the best (or the worst) in every legal-combatant-in-training. Every day, I stand in front of the statue of Ignatius de Loyola genuflecting with a sword, trying to muster the courage to deal with a different culture after years of study in state-subsidized educational institutions. The first question I uttered under my breath on the first day of school was about my doubt if this iBook toting, Youtube-watching, speed-dating, consumerist generation was really going to be the embodiment of the Jesuit tradition of breeding Men (and women) for Others. Are the concepts of intellectual discourse, nationalist consciousness and social awareness among young people as meaningless as the dead gods of ancient mythology?

I asked a member of an organization in my school about their stand on the political killings. Off the cuff, he mentioned something about their partner organization doing something about it. What exactly? He couldn't elaborate.

I asked my seat mate if he knew why we had no classes. He mumbled something about an excuse to party.

I replied to an off-topic thread in an Internet forum and got woven into a tapestry of apolitical sentiments worthy of Arachne's loom. I posted a comment in my block's online group about that catastrophic oil spill and only one person replied.

I remember all too well the question posed to the applicants to one of the best law schools in the country, "Equality before the law: Myth or reality?" At that time, with all my idealism and youthful exuberance, I wrote down a reply justifying my belief that it was a reality—delayed, yes, but a reality nevertheless. Now, even if we're repeatedly told that "those who have more in life should have less in law," I can't help but suspect that the Fates have forced us to observe how the opposite is true. This is the part of my mental labyrinth that makes me emerge out of class both challenged and bewildered.

At the end of the day, I believe we should all just fight our tendencies to be a complacent, apathetic and lethargic generation whose modern-day gods are all things consumable and self-indulgent. For every online multitude that refuses to address human rights violations, there will be someone like Rambo Guran who'll give up his life in pursuit of his principles. For every electoral scoundrel and corporate henchman who makes equality before the law a mere myth, there will rise someone like Ninoy Aquino who'll defy the dictatorship and rouse a whole nation to a collective expression of dissent. And for every anxious law student who's trapped in the labyrinth of her mind, built by thoughts of things mundane and magnificent, there will be a metaphorical Theseus who will slay the Minotaur and make freedom a reality.

Now, if only I could start studying for that exam ...

Vida Soraya Verzosa, 24, is studying at the Ateneo School of Law.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Incredible stupidity

"I don't hear of any action from the national government. Where is the government? It does not have an understanding of the magnitude of the problem. The ignorance and the stupidity are incredible."

—Martin Stummer, German owner of an island resort affected heavily by the oil spill in Guimaras.

Left behind

"There was a time in the mid-'50s when the Philippines was in the same league as Japan economically and academics-wise. Fifty years down the road, we are not only lagging behind, we are almost dead last in the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] region."

—Tycoon Lucio Tan

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Notes on Hungary and Thailand

THERE IS AT LEAST A COUPLE OF RECENT developments around the world that should be of interest to our countrymen for different reasons.

The first one was the ouster of Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, upon the initiative of the Thai military. Note that this happened in a neighboring country which has a parliamentary form of government. Note further that this form of government is being promoted in the Philippines as one that is less prone to military adventurism or coup d'états. The "Thai experience" clearly showed how wrong—very wrong—the advocates of a parliamentary system are.

The other one was the protests in Hungary after Prime Minister Ferenc Gruncsany's frank admission that his government had lied to the people just to win the elections. The lying enraged thousands of Hungarians and since their prime minister's admission, they have been flooding the streets of Budapest and calling for his resignation.

Thaksin had the courage to submit himself to the people in an election and Gruncsany had the humility to admit that he had lied. What do their brave acts say about Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?

Thaksin had no choice but to accept his fate while Gruncsany clings to his seat like GMA does.

One wonders if a military coup could happen in the Philippines these days like it did in Thailand.

The conditions in the Philippines are ripe. GMA and her ilk have been arrogantly defying reason, ignoring Supreme Court decisions, making a mockery of the Senate as a fiscalizer and equal branch of government, and governing against the will of the governed, among others.

I would not mind if an apolitical military decides to overthrow an illegitimate government, jail all corrupt officials and officers, and then work for a return to normalcy after making sure that qualified patriotic civilians get to run the next government.

But what I fear most is a takeover by military officials to whom GMA is indebted and on whose back she has been riding to keep the presidency for herself. They could decide to take over the government as their appetite for power continues to be whetted.

The "Garci" generals are holding vital positions in the military today but their days are numbered as their retirement age draws nearer. They may not want to fade away, for fear that junior officers may not look kindly at their "ungentlemanly" activities.

A military coup could be bloody. Arroyo's favorite spiceboy Michael Defensor once warned. We can only hope that should there be a coup, it would not shed a drop of blood.

We also hope that if a coup could turn out well in Bangkok, it does better in Manila—like Edsa I did 20 years ago.

—RAMON A. MAYUGA,
GeRMayuga@aol.com

Why is government insisting it owes Japanese firm billions?

LETTERS

VIC AGUSTIN IN HIS SEPT. 13 COLUMN presented the best argument for a "freezing" by the government of PNCC projects, for a review of the projects, and for a stop to the granting of another 30-year franchise to the tollway company.

Agustin said that Cuenca, who used to own the PNCC when it was yet called CDCP, denied that CDCP owes Marubeni of Japan. Nevertheless, that "loan" is now a subject of a compromise agreement by which the PNCC will lose all its assets and future earnings at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx). The compromise agreement offered by the PNCC will result in a loss of more than P6 billion for the government.

The irony here is that while the reported source of the loan says there is no loan to pay, the government, through the PNCC (which stands to lose P6 billion) insists that the loan exists. Instead of taking the side of Cuenca, the PNCC officials are taking the side of Sonny Dominguez who represents the company that reportedly bought the loan from Marubeni of Japan.

Only Cuenca's love for this country can stop this expressway holdup. We really hope the Supreme Court has that kind of patriotism as Cuenca's.

The PNCC officials? Their share from the plunder will buy them pieces of real property in other countries. So they don't need this country. After all they've ganged up on it and bled it dry. The PNCC reported that it lost almost P3 billion last year. Not only that, it owes the government over P5 billion in unremitted taxes and unpaid concession fees; and the PNB almost P3 billion.

—RAY L. JUNIA,
president,
Road Users Protection Advocates,
Unit 10 Poblete Bldg.,
17 Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City

After the oil spill, what to do now

THE OIL SPILL OFF GUIMARAS REFLECTS the insincere commitment of some corporations to social responsibility and the government's failure to fulfill its regulatory role.

The oil spill should be properly called the "Petron/Solar 1 Oil Spill" to establish proper accountability.

It has been more than a month since the oil spill. The northeast monsoon (Amihan) will soon start and this could spread the oil further to the south of Guimaras and west of Guimaras Strait, thus affecting more coastal areas. Current efforts to remove the oil spill from the beach merely provide cosmetic relief: the oil spill is only 1/10th of the Solar's total cargo; the bulk of the 2 million liters of bunker fuel is still leaking from the sunken tanker at a reported 120 liters a day. Unless the remaining oil in the tanker is removed or siphoned, the clean-up activities will only expose villagers to health hazards.

The government and the regulators of the shipping industry are likewise accountable for the Petron/Solar oil spill. By giving the MV Solar 1 clearance to sail, despite clear violations of regulations, the concerned government agencies clearly failed to fulfill their responsibility.

We call on Petron and Sunshine Maritime to:

* Expedite the removal of the MV Solar I from the sea or the siphoning of its remaining cargo of bunker oil;

* Desist from conducting workshops on indemnification and recognize the role of local government units and civil society to lead such processes;

* Indemnify the people of Guimaras for the long-term ecological damage, the loss of livelihood opportunities and the immediate and long-term effects on public health; and

* Uphold corporate social responsibility by adhering to the highest safety standards and ethical practice in their operations.

We likewise call on the government to:

* Ensure that transparent and impartial mechanisms are put in place to fairly valuate damages, and to formulate and implement long-term rehabilitation plans by actively involving the local governments of Guimaras, affected communities and civil society;

* Expedite and ensure transparent and impartial investigations as to the liability of all parties concerned including the Marina and the Philippine Coast Guard; and

* Review laws and policies on the handling and transport of hazardous cargo, and formulate and enact appropriate measures to mitigate such disasters in the future.

—LEONARD G. REYES, Community-Based Coastal Resource Management Resource Center, 13 A Maaralin St.,Central District, Quezon City, STANLEY YU, NGOs for Fisheries Reform, 59 C Salvador St., Varsity Hills, Loyola Heights, Quezon City

The national divide and military coup

WHAT IS NOTEWORTHY ABOUT THE THAI coup is that it was done without people power support. The military used the dissension among the people and charges of rampant corruption in government as its reason for taking over the reins of power.

This is the lesson we, including Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, should learn from the Thai coup. Dissension among our people over unresolved issues, charges of rampant corruption in government, and restiveness among some elements of the military have long been simmering. We could wake up one day under military control. Then it would be too late for people power to effect change or for GMA to agree to a snap election.

While we can, let's all sit up, think of the adverse possibilities, and act decisively to save our country. Or would we rather cringe despite the present state of the nation.

—AMADO F. CABAERO,
7 Espina Compound,
B. Rodriguez St., Cebu City

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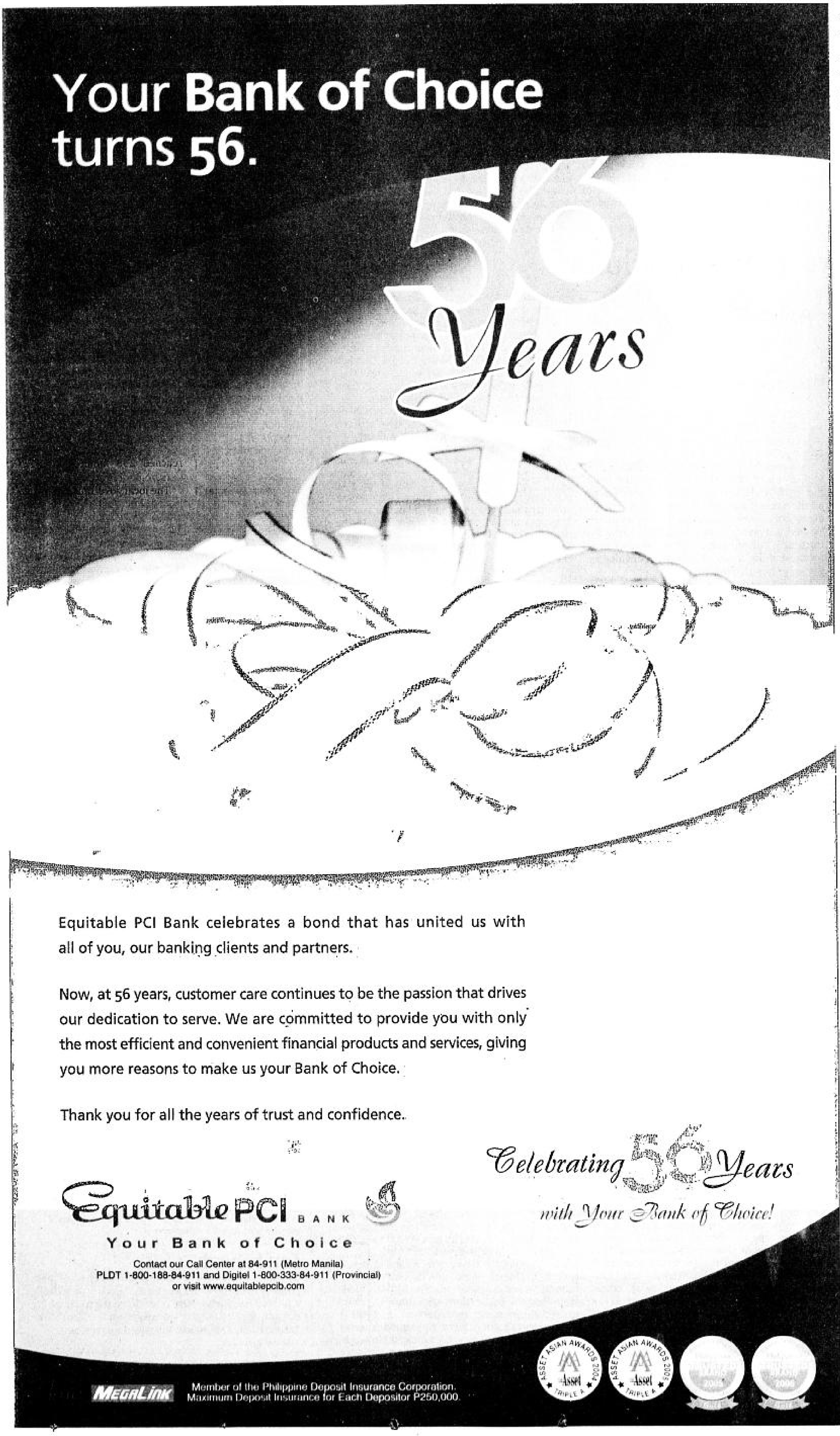
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Lawmaker faces 14 document falsification cases, other raps

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—CITY OFFICIALS have filed 14 cases of falsification of public documents on some P50 million worth of purchases and a case of violation of audit rules on contracts amounting to P54 million against Pampanga Rep. Reynaldo Aquino, this city's former mayor.

This was disclosed by Mayor Oscar Rodriguez in a press conference on Monday here.

Filed at the Department of Justice and the Office of Ombudsman, respectively, the cases sought to clear the city government of accountability in the alleged dubious transactions amid demands by suppliers and contractors for payments, Rodriguez said.

"We don't want to be charged with malfeasance for not doing anything. We also want to assert the provisions of the Local Government Code on rules in financial transactions," he said as he ruled out politics in the filing of the cases.

Reached through his mobile phone, Aquino told the INQUIRER that the allegations were "not true."

"Being filed after two years, there's probably political motivation and harassment there," said the lawmaker who served for three terms before he ran for Congress in 2004.

According to Aquino, Rodriguez perceived him as "a political rival in the future." The two used to be allies but still belong to the ruling coalition Lakas-NUCD.

"I welcome this development. It would help settle once and for all the issues raised against me," he added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered the hearing on the falsification charges at the DOJ in Manila. These were originally filed before the city prosecutor's office.

Rodriguez spoke for the first time on the cases to raise concern for the safety of city administrator Sonia Soto, one of the complainants in the cases.

Soto reported getting death threats and was accused by a rebel returnee as a New People's Army leader. The information was believed fed by Aquino's local leaders during an anticommunist seminar here in August.

Soto strongly denied the allegation.

"I am seeking protection by disclosing to the media the cases I have filed and which I am pursuing in the city's crusade for good public governance," said Soto, who is also an associate of the Institute for Solidarity in Asia.

According to Rodriguez, the falsified documents covered funds for items that were listed in the 2004 budget. At least 20 more similar cases are set to be filed, he said.

The alleged audit violations covered payments for items or services that were not in the annual budgets from 2002 to the first six months of 2004.

Rodriguez said he would not have discovered the supposed irregularities had not the COA demanded supporting documents for its post-audit work on some P300 million worth of alleged questionable transactions.

The checks were signed by Aquino, he said. A supplemental complaint for the violations of the national procurement law is due for filing also at the Office of Ombudsman, Rodriguez said.

In July, Aquino blocked the plan of the city government to obtain a P120-million loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines for the construction of 27 two-story school buildings and rehabilitation of the old public market.

The city government got a temporary restraining order and was allowed to start the projects under monitoring by the bank. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

IN THE KNOW

MENINGOCOCCEMIA or cerebrospinal fever is the acute infection of the blood stream caused by the bacteria Neisseria meningitidis. These bacteria are transmitted by respiratory droplets from the nose and throat of infected persons. Incubation period lasts from two to 10 days. Meningococcemia occurs more in males than in females.

Symptoms of the disease include high fever, headache, vomiting, nausea, stiff neck, delirium, seizures, coughs, rashes and severe skin lesions that may lead to gangrene.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

DOH says toll from meningo 9 this year

BAGUIO CITY—HEALTH OFFICIALS reported that nine people here have died of meningococcemia this year but they are quick to point out that the disease is still manageable.

Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, regional director of Department of Health-Cordillera, said the 43 meningo cases reported this year could be attributed to the government's aggressive sanitation campaign.

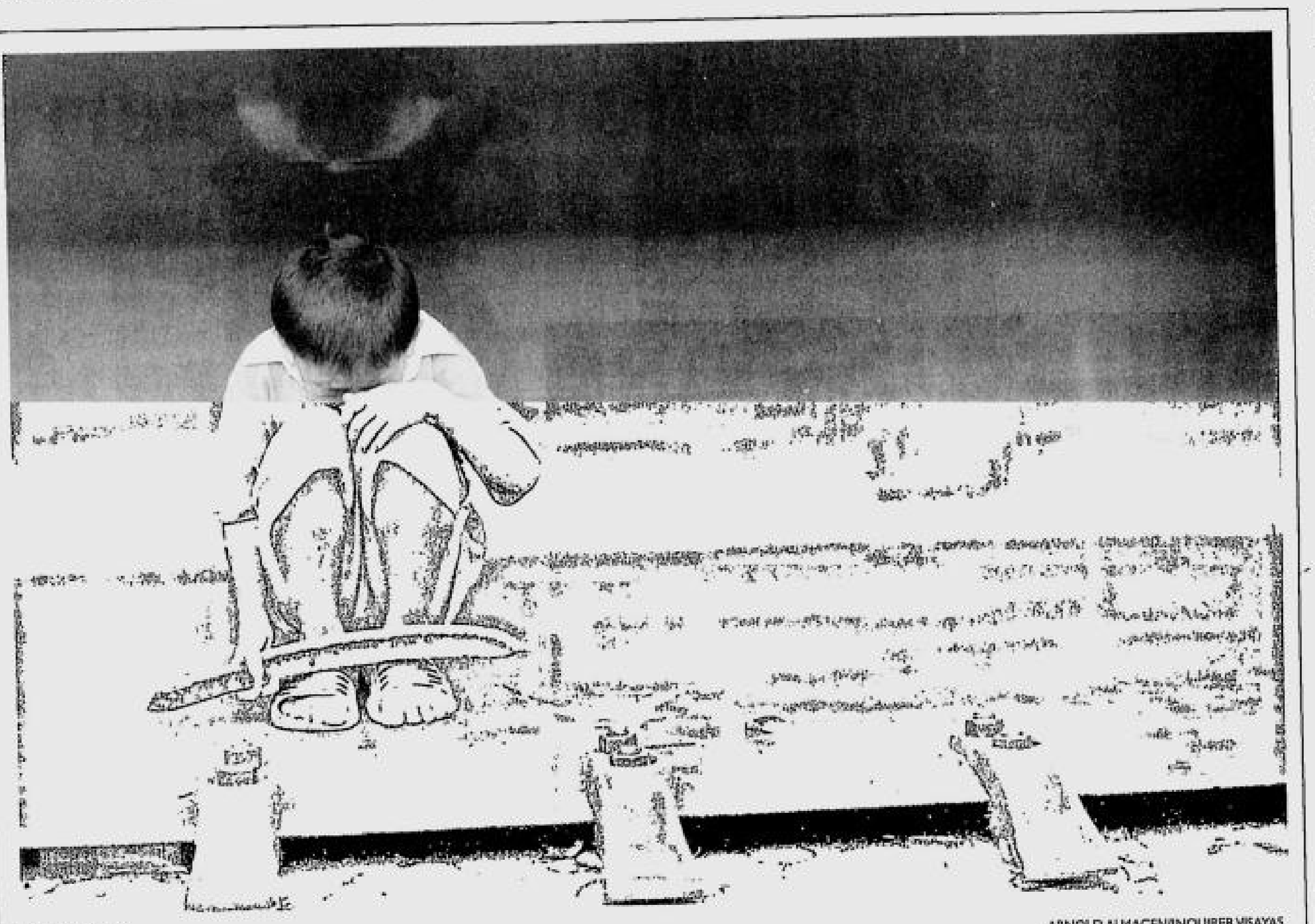
She said those who contacted the disease failed to take the anti-meningococcemia vaccination.

"Under the infectious disease control program, we can reassure the public that we are ready to deal with meningococcemia," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said in a forum here on Thursday.

Dr. Felicidad Ganga, officer in charge of the Baguio health department's epidemiology and surveillance unit, said the number of cases this year is an indication that the disease is easier to control compared to 2004 and 2005 when the disease reached 183 cases.

When the disease was reported in the last quarter of 2004, almost one case was admitted daily at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center.

"We were able to control the disease from the very start. That is why we have smaller number of cases now. Our health workers are more skilled and prepared to handle meningococcemia," Ganga said. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

SHELTER
A boy cries on the plates of a bulldozer in Iloilo City after he was piqued by taunts from playmates.

Evacuation continues due to oil spill

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

NUEVA VALENCIA, GUIMARAS—The number of residents forced to leave their homes because of toxic fumes from the oil sludge continues to rise as officials quarantine the affected villages.

The Guimaras provincial social welfare and development office reported that the total evacuees reached 258 families or 1,111 persons as of Sept. 20.

The local government evacuated the residents from five villages of Nueva Valencia and two villages in Sibunag.

These include 67 families and 326 persons in evacuation centers and 191 families and 785 persons who are staying with their relatives.

The evacuation started last Aug. 30 after results of air samplings showed a high level of toxicity of the environment in the areas worst hit by the oil sludge.

The residents depend on the government and private donors for food.

Novelita Tayupon, 40, said her family receives 7.5 kg of rice and six cans of sardines as their ration for three days. She has four children aged 3 to 9 years old.

The officials brought them from their house along the coast of Barangay Tando last week and transferred them to the makeshift quarters at the perimeter of the barangay plaza. Twenty-five other families stay in the plaza and in two tents beside it.

US colonel says RP gov't winning war on Sayyaf

JOLO, SULU—THE PHILIPPINE government is winning the war against terrorist groups like the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, a US military official yesterday said.

Col. James Linder, commander of the joint special operations task force, said the success in the drive against the terror groups could be seen in how local residents cooperate with the military and police.

Linder said residents now tip off authorities about the location of the terror groups.

American troops have been helping at least nine battalions of Filipino soldiers who are involved in the operations against the Abu Sayyaf which started on Sept. 6.

Yesterday, United States Ambassador Kristie Kenney visited Indanan and Panamao towns here despite the ongoing military operations.

American and Filipino soldiers provided security for the ambassador who visited US-funded infrastructure projects like public toilets, roads and markets.

The military has suffered casualties in its ongoing offensive against the Abu Sayyaf. It has admitted meeting strong resistance from the terrorist group. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

RP lantern makers target markets in US

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Samples of giant and small lanterns produced in this Pampanga capital have been submitted by the city government for certification by the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) in a bid to open the United States market to local craftsmen.

Ferdinand Caylao, chief of the city's human resources development department, said the certification was "still under process by the UL." A UL mark signifies compliance with internationally-accepted safety standards.

"The whole decorative product has yet to get the UL nod," he said.

Caylao said that for the centennial celebration of Filipino migration to the United States, to be held in December this year in San Francisco, the city government would use UL-listed components for the lantern's wiring harness.

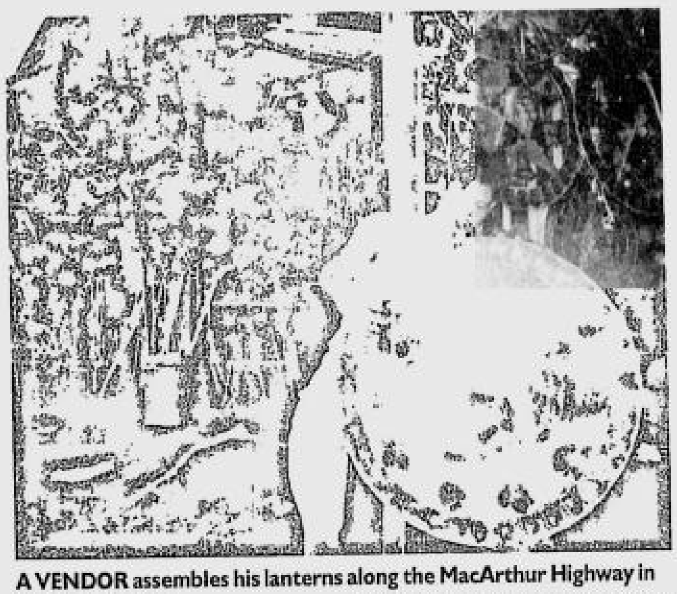
This would hopefully convince the US Homeland Security in the meantime to allow the entry of several giant lanterns that were chosen as symbols for the big Filipino-American event, he said.

Caylao and Councilor Alex Patiu, who are both engineers, led the team seeking the UL trademark. The lantern industry, originally a religious art that some 500 craftsmen in the city have turned into a backyard enterprise since the 1970s, has failed to venture into large-scale export due to standards restrictions.

Most of the parts and components, especially the rotor through which lights blink in colorful pattern, are merely improvised pieces from local materials, Caylao said.

The homegrown enterprise gives employment to some 10,000 families, mostly doing the business on shark loans or through financiers.

The multimillion-peso industry produces between 50,000 and 100,000 lanterns a year that are sold all over the country. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



A VENDOR assembles his lanterns along the MacArthur Highway in Moncada, Tarlac.
TOOTS SOBERANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

3 cultists arrested for illegal guns

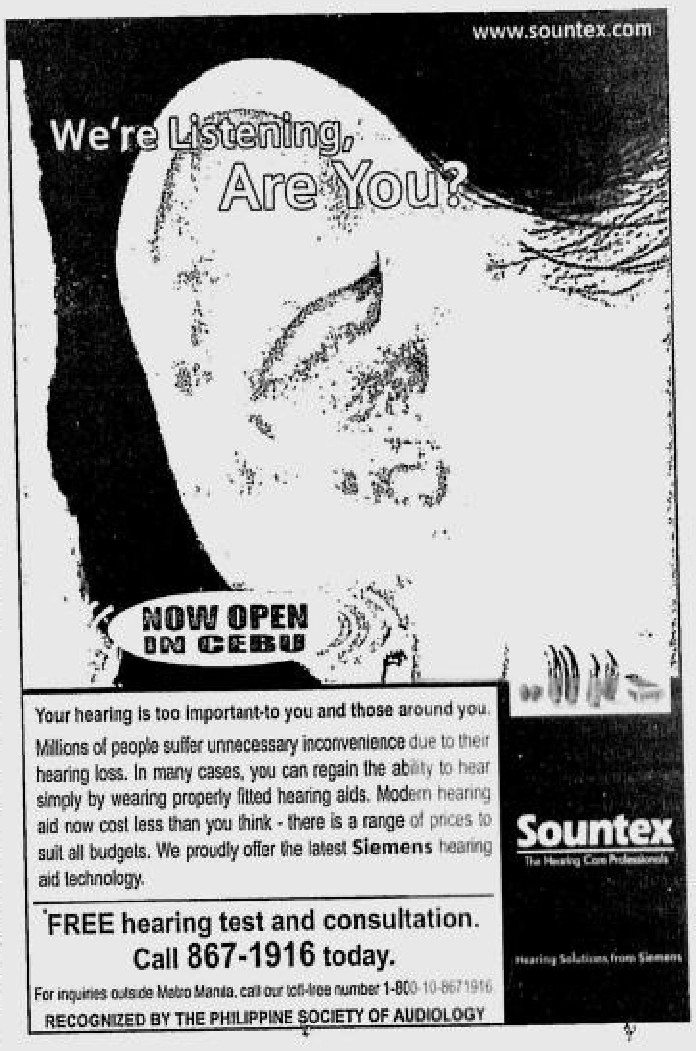
CALAMBA CITY—POLICEMEN raided the houses of members of a cult in Barangay Parian here and arrested three of them for possession of unlicensed firearms just before dawn Monday.

Supt. Roland Bustos, Calamba police chief, identified the arrested suspects as Leonardo Villegas, 57, Michael Redola, 31, and Jesus Melgar, 41.

The three were alleged members of a group called Haring Bakal whose members believe they are invincible from bullets and bladed weapons.

A police team headed by Bustos raided at least nine houses inside the Banaticla Compound at around 5 a.m. after receiving several complaints from the residents about the alleged indiscriminate firing in their area.

Bustos said they confiscated from the suspects a caliber 22 rifle, a .38-cal. revolver, a .45-cal. pistol, two improvised shotguns and several rounds of ammunition for the firearms. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



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Rice fields offer hope for Bontoc tourism

By EV Espiritu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—With the deteriorating condition of the world famous Banaue rice terraces in Ifugao, this province is banking on its distinctly carved "*payew*" (rice fields) to lure tourists.

These *payew* and Bontoc's distinct culture and tradition are what the staging of the Lang-ay Festival in April and the Am-among Festival in September wishes to highlight as the main come-on to tourists.

But while aiming to become a top tourist destination in Northern Luzon, the people of Mt. Province must know what they really want their land to become since it's in the land where their culture is perpetually attached.

'Yes, we also have rice terraces. They just need to be discovered'

Unique

This capital town and seat of government boasts of its uniquely carved *payew*. It is unique in the sense that instead of soil-supported rice paddies, the fields are painstakingly carved stone walls.

Villagers themselves express awe at how the stones reached the mountains and were used in the paddies.

This fourth-class municipality has 16 barangays covering a land area of 37,259 hectares. Bontoc Central is abundant with picturesque *payew*. The village has four barangays—Samoki, Caluttit, Bontoc Ili, and Poblacion.

"Yes, we also have rice terraces. They just need to be discovered," Gov. Maximo Dalog said, adding that 10 percent of the province's land is devoted to rice fields.

Livelihood

The *payew* serve as the primary source of livelihood of the villagers. They can also be potential tourist attractions that can boost the town's economy and tourism industry.

A growing number of *payew* owners in Bontoc proper have opted to convert portions of their farmlands into residential lots and commercial areas.

'House terraces'

This is evident in Samoki, according to Bontoc Mayor Alfonso Kiat-ong. He said he could foresee that in 10 years or even earlier, the village would be filled with "house terraces, instead of rice terraces."

"We could not control it. They own the lands," he said.

With the growing urbanization of Bontoc, age-old customs and traditions that distinguish the town villagers from the rest of the region are slowly dying, if not completely lost.

USUAL sights in the "payew" or rice terraces in Bontoc, Mountain Province. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

DENR forms fact-finding team to probe rape of Sierra Madre

LUCENA CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF Environment and Natural Resources has formed a team to investigate the extent and causes of the continuing destruction of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in Quezon province.

The team was formed upon the request of the Metro Reina (Real, Infanta, General Nakar) Multi Stakeholders Forest Management Council (MRMSFMC).

Jay Lim, forest protection program coordinator of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), a nationwide public interest environmental law office, said the team would be led by Environment Undersecretary Roy Kyamko.

The TK joined the MRMSFMC in a dialogue earlier with Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes.

"There's really a need for an impartial team to conduct the investigation," said Lim.

The MRMSFMC is a multisectoral council composed of local officials, military officials, nongovernment organizations, indigenous peoples and Church leaders from Northern Quezon.

Infanta Mayor Grace America chairs the council.

In a resolution, the council said that "despite the DENR's imposition of 'No Cutting' (total log ban) in the region to prevent forest degradation ... there are reported and documented cutting of trees in the Sierra Madre."

"There is a pressing need to stop the perpetuation of connivance between forestry law violators and enforcers," the council said.

It said an exhaustive investigation of various "dubious incidents" would lead the way to measures and strategies to stop the rape of the Sierra Madre.

The group said it had found several cases pointing to the involvement of environment officials in illegal logging. It said the connivance works this way:

Newly cut trees are passed off as retrieved drifted logs and the environment officials attach spurious documents to make it appear that the logs were just retrieved and not newly cut.

A source said the military in the area had documents that would unmask the persons behind the illegal logging.

"The Army officials are just waiting for the formal probe to start to submit the... documents," the informant said.

The MRMSFMC has expressed alarm over continued logging in the Sierra Madre, saying that this threatened residents of Metro Reina.

In November last year, after four successive typhoons, close to 1,000 people died in floods and landslides and millions of pesos worth of property were destroyed in Quezon and Aurora.

The tragedy was traced to massive logging in the Sierra Madre.

Three weeks ago, a multisectoral team, composed of personnel from the DENR-National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force, the military and the TK combed the mountain ranges and confiscated a total of 131 cubic meters (55,557 board feet) of square logs, flitches and sawn lumber, with an estimated market value of P1.9 million.

The council also supported Real Mayor Arsenio Ramallosa in his opposition to a request of San Roque Sawmill Corp., a big-time logger based in Aurora, to use his town as exit route in the transshipment of lumber for distribution to Manila and other provinces.

It expressed apprehension that the use of Real as a transport channel might also be an avenue for the "technical smuggling" of timber resources from Metro Reina. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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SAMSUNG

Militant group raises alarm over slays of women leftists

BAGUIO CITY—A women's group here has expressed alarm over the killing of 78 women activists under the Arroyo administration.

In a forum here last week, Vernie Yocogan-Diano, secretary general of Innabuyog-Gabriela, blamed the military for most of the killings.

This has moved them, she said, to bring the issue to a committee on the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw) that was ratified by the Philippine government, according to Diano.

"All governments, including the Philippine government that signed this human rights convention, are bound to respect, protect and fulfill women's human rights. Specifically, party governments are expected to enact anti-discrimination policies and provide effective mechanisms and remedies where women can redress for rights and violations," she said.

She did not, however, present proofs of military involvement in most of the killings.

Diano said a report presented by Gabriela Women's Party-list Rep. Liza Maza to the Cedaw committee in New York in September highlighted the political killings of women in the Philippines.

The report indicated the government's poor compliance to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of women, Diano said.

Records of human rights group Karapatan showed that from 2001 to 2006, 719 political activists were killed. Seventy-eight of those slain were women, said Cye Reyes, a member of Innabuyog-Gabriela. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

WOMEN are sometimes at the forefront of protests like this one at the World Bank office in Ortigas against World Bank policies in Third World countries like the Philippines. RAFFY LERMA

Storm still rages since Aug. 11 sinking of tanker

SHE SITS IN EERIE SILENCE ON the dark and chilly sea floor, occasionally sending tiny globules of oil to the surface, yet the storm that the MT Solar I whipped up when she sank off Guimaras Island on Aug. 11 rages on.

A preliminary report submitted by experts from the firm London Offshore Consultants Ltd. Pte., who had sent down a remote-operated vehicle (ROV) to take video of the sunken tanker, said that "presently, the leakage from the vessel, as sighted, was relatively minor."

The experts, who were on board the Japanese research ship Shinsei Maru, had been commissioned by Petron Corp. and insurance firms to recommend how best to remove the oil remaining in the Solar I's tanks. A copy of their report was made available to the INQUIRER.

The ROV, guided from the surface by the experts, used a robotic arm to tighten certain valves on the tanker to reduce the oil leaks.

The report said "the intact upper deck areas, sealed tank lids and closed ventilation valves, as well as the minimal current sighted at the seabed, do not suggest it (the oil leak) should worsen in the near future."

If it does not move

"If the vessel remains in its same orientation and position, that is, it does not move, it is unlikely that a greater leakage will occur."

The experts said "factors that might cause increased leakage from the vessel in its present state (are) if the current increases in strength or if the sea temperature increases slightly."

They said, however, that they "need to check whether this is likely or not in this particular area."

They noted that "although the seabed surface is soft mud, and the vessel is on a slope, the lack of any appreciable subsea current and the buildup of material at the aft end of the vessel suggest that further movement is very unlikely."

However, they suggested that "it would be wise to undertake an on-bottom stability study, if possible."

Siphoning work

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, head of Task Force Guimaras, said yesterday Petron's insurer, the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund, had agreed to fund the siphoning of the remaining oil in the tanker and would take this up at its executive meeting in February. But he said preliminary engineering work was set to begin next month. The fund will choose the company that will do the siphoning.

Regional task force head Rafael Coscolluela said last week it would take at least three and a half months to completely siphon the oil, including another month and a half for the preparation and the equipment to reach the site, and another two months to complete the operation.

"The operation would be complicated and would require special precautionary measures," Coscolluela said, referring to the possibility that if not done right, the operation could leak more oil.

"There is minimal oil leakage," he added. "It comes out every few seconds and it consists of about a one-foot circle, the oil that surfaces."

Because of the reduced leakage, the Coast Guard station chief in Iloilo, Commodore Harold Jarder, said only one ship had been deployed near the sink site along with three tugboats.

Apprehensions

Malacañang played down apprehensions by environmentalists in an INQUIRER report that the Coast Guard's use of chemical dispersants to clean up the oil spill was harming marine life.

"The dispersants used are accredited and accepted internationally," said Cruz. "These are not harmful, according to the Philippine Coast Guard."

Added Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye: "The government will ensure that such measures are both environmentally friendly and economically sustainable."

Questioned by senators at a budget hearing yesterday, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said his department had nothing to do with the dispersants.

But Reyes later told reporters: "The apprehension and concern that these dispersants will cause damage is more perception than reality."

He said the dispersants were being applied 24 km from the coastline and not in shallow waters. "So there is no damage, no threat to the environment. The alarm is fake."

Coscolluela yesterday said in Bacolod City that the government regulates the use of chemicals used to disperse the oil spill to prevent harm to the environment.

While the government is committed to removing the sunken fuel, he said the Coast Guard enforces the rules on the use of chemical dispersants to stop the spill from spreading.

Pressure to remove oil

But several nongovernment organizations (NGOs), as well as local government units (LGUs), have continued to pressure government agencies to speed up the removal of the oil.

Time seems to move slower on the surface.

The London-based experts warned: "However, eventually this vessel, if it stays in its same position as seems likely, will break and release the oil over time. This though is unlikely to be a sudden release, rather more likely a gradual release. How long (we) cannot estimate at the moment."

Meanwhile, the Solar I sits eerily in silence on the sea floor, occasionally sending tiny blobs of oil to the surface, unmindful of the storm that rages overhead as she slowly spills out her gut. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Juliet Labog-Javellana and Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Guimaras wildlife sanctuaries offer hope

From page A1

by Petron to find both short- and long-term solutions to the damage caused by the oil spill from the MT Solar I that sank in bad weather on Aug. 11. An estimated half of the 2.19 million liters of industrial fuel oil the tanker was carrying for Petron from Bataan to Zamboanga del Sur spilled into the sea.

The Silliman team said the unaffected coves and lagoons displayed "unique geological formations along the western coast of Nueva Valencia like the Chocolate Hills of Bohol."

"These geological formations are heavily forested with mangroves and terrestrial tree species, all of which contribute to the primary productivity of coastal areas by supplying nutrients and organic fertilizers," the experts said.

"They are of special interest because of the biodiversity in them (and) also because they could be tourist attractions."

The scientists found the Dolores-Tando area to be "biodiverse and geologically unique." They proposed to make it a wildlife refuge to be protected from further oil contamination, overexploitation and degradation.

Legal measures needed

"Legal measures should be taken to declare this area a wildlife refuge and community awareness programs should be conducted ... It also has an existing limestone forest with still appreciably good forest cover," the scientists said.

They stressed the importance of conservation because "coastal communities depend on the sea for their livelihood. The productivity of the sea and coastal areas depend on their biodiversity."

The scientists recommended that conservationists monitor every six months the bird migration that starts in late September or early October, when the northern birds start arriving, all the way to mid-February, the peak of the migration. They also suggested that studies go on until April and May "in order to get a comprehensive record for the island."

The experts also said coastal ecosystems comprising mangroves, sea grass beds and coral reefs should be monitored every six months and annually for the next five years.

Corals serve as both food and home for fish and other marine life. They form part of a complex marine ecosystem that includes sea grass and mangroves, which protect coastlines against erosion and sedimentation.

Unaffected hard coral

The Silliman study reported that more than 47,000 hectares of hard coral in the southern coast of Guimaras were unaffected by the oil spill.

The experts suggested that sediment and plankton, small organisms that other sea life use for food, be monitored every six months for the first two years and annually over the next five years.

Fisheries must be monitored every six months for the first two years and annually over the next five years, they said.

The proposed wildlife refuge area covers 2 sq km with a coastline of 9.8 km and a seascape of 1.275 sq km.

Recommendations

Aside from environmental conservation, the Silliman team recommended these long-term measures:

- "There is a need to study carefully shipping routes for passenger and cargo ships carrying hazardous materials. Presently, these two types of ships share these shipping routes or lanes. Cargo ships carrying hazardous materials must have specific routes that are as far as possible from critical coastal and marine ecosystems and protected areas."
- "Regular training on oil spill management should be conducted in coastal communities at risk of oil spills based on shipping routes by the Coast Guard and the DENR."
- "Persuade the oil and chemical companies and shipping companies engaged in the business of carrying oil, chemical products, and toxic and hazardous wastes to set up an Environmental Oil Spill Contingency Fund that would help defray the costs of cleanup, rehabilitation and restoration of the environment and research on the long term effects of oil or chemical spills. The fund may also be used to shoulder the medical and health expenses and to compensate people affected by spills.

"The fund should be established in light of the 1992 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage and the 1992 International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage."

- "Require oil and chemical companies and shipping companies involved in transporting oil and chemical products to submit their emergency response plans detailing how they would respond to a major oil or chemical spill."
- "There is a need to strictly enforce all laws, regulations, international conventions and standards for maritime-related activities and to impose penalties on violators."

Partnerships required

Leading scientists and academics have suggested the ecological rehabilitation of Guimaras from the effects of the oil spill contamination will require a long-term partnership among government agencies, private corporations and global institutions involved in environmental conservation.

The Philippine president of World Wildlife Fund, Dr. Lorenzo Tan, in a paper circulated after the oil spill, said "a multiyear ecological rehabilitation and recovery plan needs to be formulated, and embedded into the province's own master plan."

"This template will be essential for monitoring, evaluation and most important of all, continuity," he added. "A roundtable conference must be organized to integrate resource pledges and address funding gaps. There are many interested individuals, corporations and institutions with regional, national and global mandates."

Tan added: "The rehabilitation of Guimaras must not be merely a scientific or political exercise; rather, it must be a replicable model that communities, corporations and local governments can emulate and benefit from."

Solid scientific platform

He said the WWF hoped to help the University of the Philippines-Visayas "establish a solid scientific platform for an effective and multiyear initiative ... A science-based, community-led plan is a catalyst for continuity, transparency, accountability and, ultimately, quantifiable results."

Stressing that the country has "an ecology-dependent economy," Tan said "close to half of all municipalities are along the coastline, and half of all Filipinos depend on seafood as their primary source of protein."

"Much work needs to be done, involving many disciplines," he said, including "careful ecological assessments."

"The rehabilitation and biological recovery efforts need to be started, set into motion and structured for continuity and lasting impact," Tan said.

CLEANUP workers load onto their boat sacks of bunker oil debris collected from villages in Nueva Valencia town in Guimaras.

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

A MEMBER of the "Save our Seas, Save our Life" free medical mission organized by Gabriela-Panay examines an oil cleanup worker in Barangay Guiwanon in Nueva Valencia.

ARNOLD ALMACEN, INQUIRER VISAYAS

Mangroves to hasten recovery

From page A1

An independent study, also commissioned by Petron and conducted by a team of Silliman University scientists, found that none of the coral beds had been affected by the oil spill, but several mangrove areas were. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Warning on cleanup

For the mangrove areas affected, the Arab experts recommended skimming the oil from the surface and using oil-absorbent materials to clean the trees. But they cautioned against "heavy cleanup operations (which) may cause more damage."

People, they said, should not be allowed to go to the "subliteral area (because) crabs (are) still alive and working" in the natural rehabilitation process.

The experts said rehabilitation work could begin after three to six months by replanting mangrove seedlings. They advised against pulling out dead trees "because roots are intertwined."

For the sea grass areas, the experts said "heavy cleanup operations may cause more damage. They suggested removing the oil from the water surface and adding fertilizer to speed up revegetation.

Sea grass beds form an important part of the marine ecosystem. Aside from providing a buffer for coral reefs to protect coasts and mangroves from strong waves, sea grass support a host of marine life.

Natural sandblasting

For the shores, the experts recommended removing the oil and debris, and letting "natural sandblasting (wave action)" take care of the natural cleaning process which may take one to two years.

Long-term studies worldwide support the experts' recommendations. In November 1973, eight months after an oil spill off the southern coast of Puerto Rico, scientists found the reemergence of young trees.

Although sediment oil was high, chemists from the Bowdoin College in Maine found that the oil had been heavily weathered and degraded. Their studies suggested that toxic components were gone in about six months.

Chemical dispersants

In another oil spill on Aug. 30, 1992, in southern Australia, cleanup crews were advised that the use of chemical dispersants in mangrove areas was likely to increase damage. In the lightly oiled areas, the trees recovered rapidly.

The oil spill off Guimaras occurred on Aug. 11 after a tanker sank in bad weather and dumped half of the 2.19 million liters of industrial fuel oil it was carrying, affecting some 220 km of shoreline.

In comparison, during the 1991 Gulf War, some 780 oil wells were set on fire and impacted almost 777 km of coastline in the Arabian Gulf.

The infamous Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989 dumped 254,7000 barrels of oil, causing environmental and "social" damage estimated at $10 billion.

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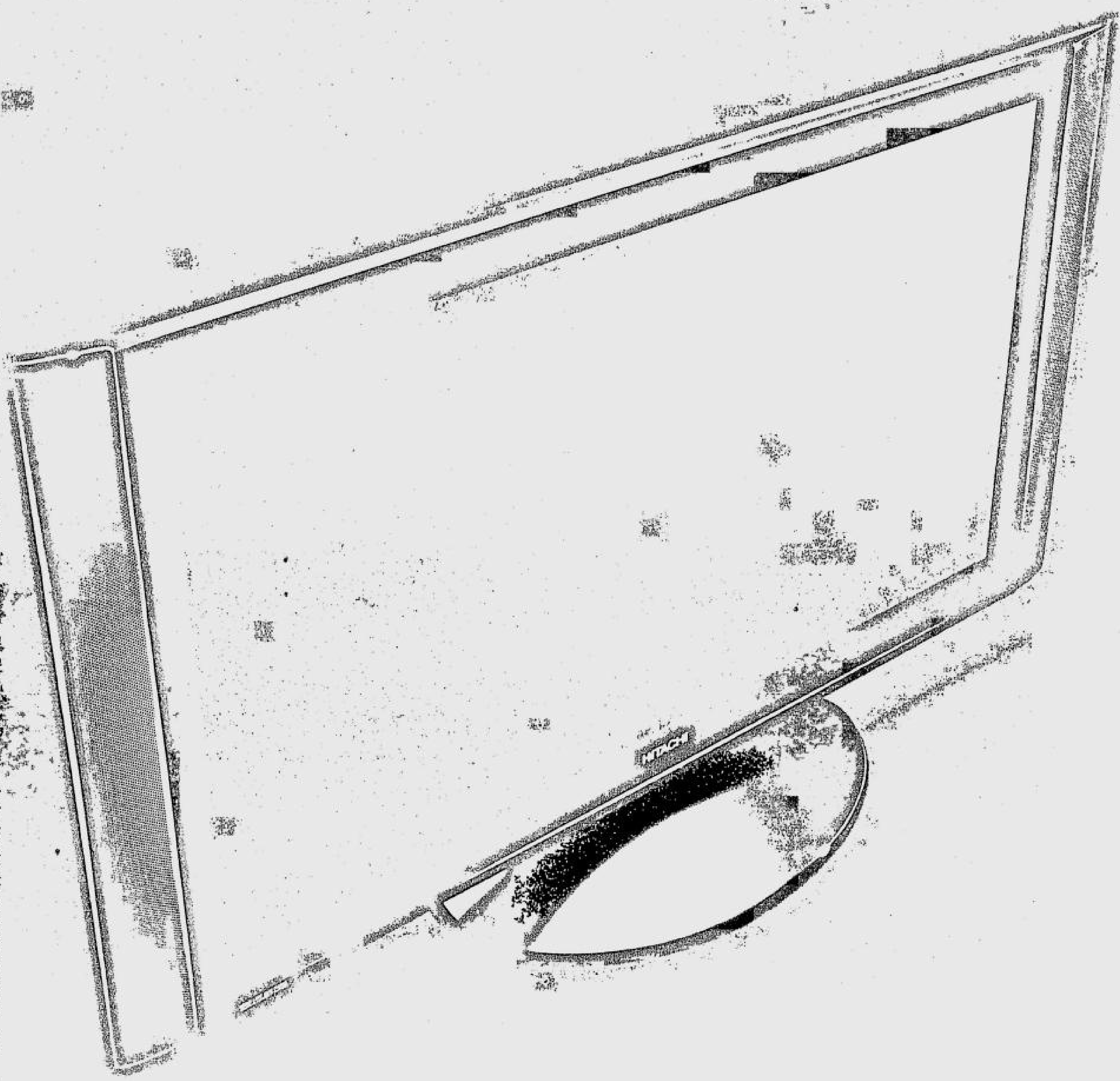

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Valenzuela City hit by dengue epidemic

Health execs report 78% hike in cases

By DJ Yap

DENGUE CASES IN VALENZUELA CITY have already reached epidemic proportions this year despite an intensive sanitation campaign to combat the mosquito-borne disease, city officials said yesterday.

From Jan. 1 to Sept. 23, the number of dengue cases in the city has gone up by 78 percent compared to last year, according to a report of the city's epidemiology and surveillance unit.

Valenzuela epidemiologist Manuel Mapue said in a report that as of Sept. 23 this year, they have recorded 722 dengue cases, with nine deaths.

In contrast, only 311 cases were reported during the same period in 2005, and 405 cases for the entire year, city information officer Marither Menia added.

"We already went past the dengue epidemic threshold level," Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian said.

Based on computations done by the city health department, dengue incidence in Valenzuela City has already surpassed the epidemic threshold, a figure based on increases in dengue cases over a period of five years, Menia said.

Dengue hot spots

Just last week, 27 new cases were monitored, Mapue said in his report. More than half of the cases came from District 2, particularly Barangays Gen. T. de Leon, Karuhatan and Marulas.

The same report revealed that the ages of those who came down with the disease ranged from 4 months to 59 years old.

The most affected age group, however, was the five to 14-year-olds, which accounted for half of the cases. More than half, or 53 percent, were males.

City officials, meanwhile, expressed alarm over the apparent futility of their efforts to prevent a dengue epidemic. "We have done everything to keep dengue-causing mosquitoes at bay," Gatchalian said.

"We cleaned houses, conducted fogging operations, and even formed teams to dispose of old tires and containers that could be breeding grounds for mosquitoes," he added.

The mayor said the residents could be blamed themselves for their insufficient "follow-through"—failing to keep their surroundings clean and destroying possible mosquito breeding grounds.

Gatchalian urged city residents to "religiously employ simple measures" to ward off mosquitoes, like making their children wear long pants to school.

BATH TIME!

Christmas may still be several months away but holiday decorations are already on display along Katipunan Road in Quezon City, to the delight of a boy who decides to give one of the miniature Santas a bath. JOAN BONDOC

DENR: Uncollected Metro garbage wind up in rivers, esteros

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SOME 1,000 TONS OF GARBAGE generated by residents in Metro Manila end up being thrown into rivers, esteros or are left to rot on the streets because they are not collected by waste collectors.

This piece of bad news surfaced yesterday in the Senate hearing of the 2006 budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Sen. Franklin Drilon said garbage collection efficiency in the metropolis was only 85 percent. This meant, he added, that 1,000 tons out of the 6,169,000 tons of garbage produced daily by Metro residents went uncollected.

His statement was confirmed by Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes.

When asked where the uncollected garbage went, Reyes said: "The households throw them into esteros, rivers and on the streets."

Drilon expressed concern over the situation and asked Reyes to come up with a comprehensive program to address the garbage problem in Metro Manila.

Not our problem

The DENR chief, however, said that waste collection was the responsibility of local governments.

Sen. Pia Cayetano, chair of the Senate environment committee, said the garbage problem was compounded by corruption in the use of funds for garbage disposal.

"A lot of money is made under the table. The funds are not being used for waste disposal," Cayetano added.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal said she has asked the DENR to submit a list of all garbage collection contracts in the last two years but the department has yet to comply with her request.

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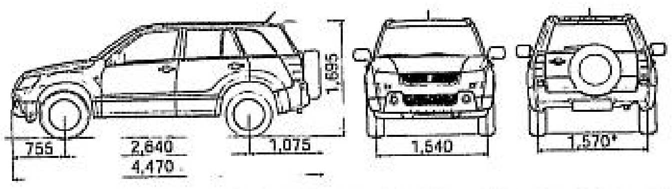

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New NBI official to focus on media killings

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICER IN charge of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Regional Operations Services has vowed to focus on sensational cases involving the media.

"We will give a hundred percent attention to media and political killings," Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda, former chief of the NBI Special Task Force (STF), told reporters in an interview.

Esmeralda said he would ensure that under his supervision, the bureau's regional offices would become more dynamic and proactive.

NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Ruel Lasala, whose office is directly under Esmeralda's, expressed support for the NBI official's appointment.

"Esmeralda's appointment will be very beneficial to the regional commands because he is young, energetic and hardworking," Lasala said.

Age an advantage

He added, "Esmeralda will have time to visit the regional offices, unlike the past deputy directors who were old when they were appointed to the post."

As for text messages circulating in the bureau that Esmeralda had been accused of kidnapping, car theft, murder and indirect bribery in the past, Lasala said all the charges have since been dropped.

"Esmeralda has been cleared of all those charges ... We are all susceptible to those accusations when we are doing our duties as law enforcers," the NBI NCR chief said.

Esmeralda was designated by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez as acting director of the NBI ROS after the former chief of the division, Fermin Nasol, retired.

The new NBI official is a lawyer and has a bachelor's degree in criminology.

He also obtained a master's degree in criminology, major in Law Enforcement Administration, and a doctorate in the same field.

Cops probing woman's death

By Tarra V. Quismundo

POLICE HAVE YET TO DETERMINE the circumstances behind the death of a 60-year-old woman who was found with burns all over her body inside her house in Makati.

Ofelia Natividad was found lying on her bed inside her room at around 3:30 a.m. yesterday. Her room, a small enclosure in her family's house, also served as a sari-sari (variety) store.

Marlon Pajanostan, among the first responders from the Makati Rescue team, said Natividad was already dead when they got to the house on Honradez Street in Barangay Olympia, Makati City.

Her relatives told rescuers they spotted a fire in her room before her body was found, Pajanostan added.

Investigators from the Makati Police Homicide Unit, however, said they have yet to determine whether there was really a fire and what caused it, and whether Natividad died because of her burns, or due to suffocation.

Pajanostan said Natividad sustained burns all over her face and body, which she could have sustained if her blanket had caught on fire.

An electric fan which had been placed just behind the bed's headrest was also burnt and had toppled onto the bed, he added.

Guard linked to man's slay surrenders

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE SECURITY GUARD WHO ALLEGEDly shot dead a 65-year-old Pakistani inside a heavily guarded subdivision in Pasig City four days ago voluntarily surrendered to the police yesterday.

Danilo Celso, a security guard of the Valle Verde 6 Subdivision in Barangay Ugong, gave himself up to officials of the Philippine National Police Headquarters Support Service in Camp Crame.

He was later turned over to the custody of Pasig City policemen.

Celso, 49, has been accused of shooting to death businessman Yousuf Saeed on Thursday afternoon in front of the Benson Manor Building in the subdivision.

Saeed, the president of the building's homeowners association, was killed instantly. Witnesses said they saw Celso climbing the fence at the back of the building minutes after they heard gunshots.

In her statement to police, Saeed's wife, Rowena, said that a day before the incident, her husband had accosted Celso because a woman was smoking near the guard post.

METROBRIEFS

Deaf-free city

FIFTY deaf schoolchildren received free digital hearing aids from the Manila City government over the weekend in connection with its "Dapat Walang Bingi sa Maynila" project. Mayor Lito Atienza said the "hearing for all" project was aimed at making the city deaf-free by providing a comprehensive health care system for residents, especially the indigent. The city government has signed a memorandum of agreement with Ledesma Audiological Center, which will provide Manila schoolchildren with the hearing devices. The center will also conduct free annual hearing tests and provide a one-year guarantee for the hearing aids.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Speedier development

THE MUNTINLUPA City government yesterday urged the National Housing Authority (NHA) to speed up the development of a relocation site for poor families who will be displaced by the Southrail rehabilitation project. The Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) noted that the NHA has yet to draw up a site development plan for the 50-ha socialized housing site in the New Bilibid Prisons Reservation Area. Clearing operations along the tracks of the Philippine National Railways, from the stretch of Caloocan City to Alabang in Muntinlupa, will start in the last quarter of the year.

Jocelyn R. Uy

DID YOU KNOW

ON SEPT. 26, 1913, A GROUP OF WOMEN—composed mostly of the wives of Philippine Columbian Club members—formed the Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas, a charitable institution whose mission was to help the poor, orphans, widows and nursing mothers. The organization's first settlement house was a rented building in Avenida, Rizal. In 1925, a permanent settlement was built on a 5,000-sq m site on Canonigo Street in Paco, Manila. The association later put up the Fundacion de Damas de Filipinas to run the place and help raise funds.

In December 1998, fire caused by faulty electrical wiring engulfed the settlement and killed 28 of its young wards and care providers. Then President Joseph Estrada released P2 million and sought the help of his friends and former classmates at Ateneo to rebuild the settlement. On Feb. 14, 1999, the care center reopened formally. It included a dormitory, a chapel, learning center, library and pharmacy.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

What's wrong with appointing Danga as Navy chief?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH VICE ADM. Tirso Danga becoming chief of the Philippine Navy?

The current commander of Western Command (Wescom), based in Palawan, is more than qualified for the Navy post, officially known as Flag Officer in Command (FOIC).

Danga was never proven to have directly participated in the "Hello Garci" scandal when he was chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Time and again, Danga has said that the Isafp did not have any bugging device during his time.

Even when I was hanging out at the Isafp headquarters during the time of my close friend, Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, the military's main intelligence arm didn't have eavesdropping equipment.

In my frequent talks with Danga, I found him to be very idealistic. His idealism, in fact, led him to join the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) in his younger days.

When Danga was the Isafp chief, then antikidnapping czar Angelo Reyes was very successful in going after kidnap-for-ransom syndicates because he made full use of the military's central intelligence unit.

But Danga, a low-profile officer, never trumpeted his achievements in the antikidnapping drive. Ask Environment Secretary Reyes, who was then interior secretary and concurrent antikidnap czar.

There's another trait that is not so well known about Danga, a member of Class 1975 of the Philippine Military Academy: He's a disciplinarian, a stickler for military regulations.

I once saw him accost an enlisted man who was not wearing his uniform properly.

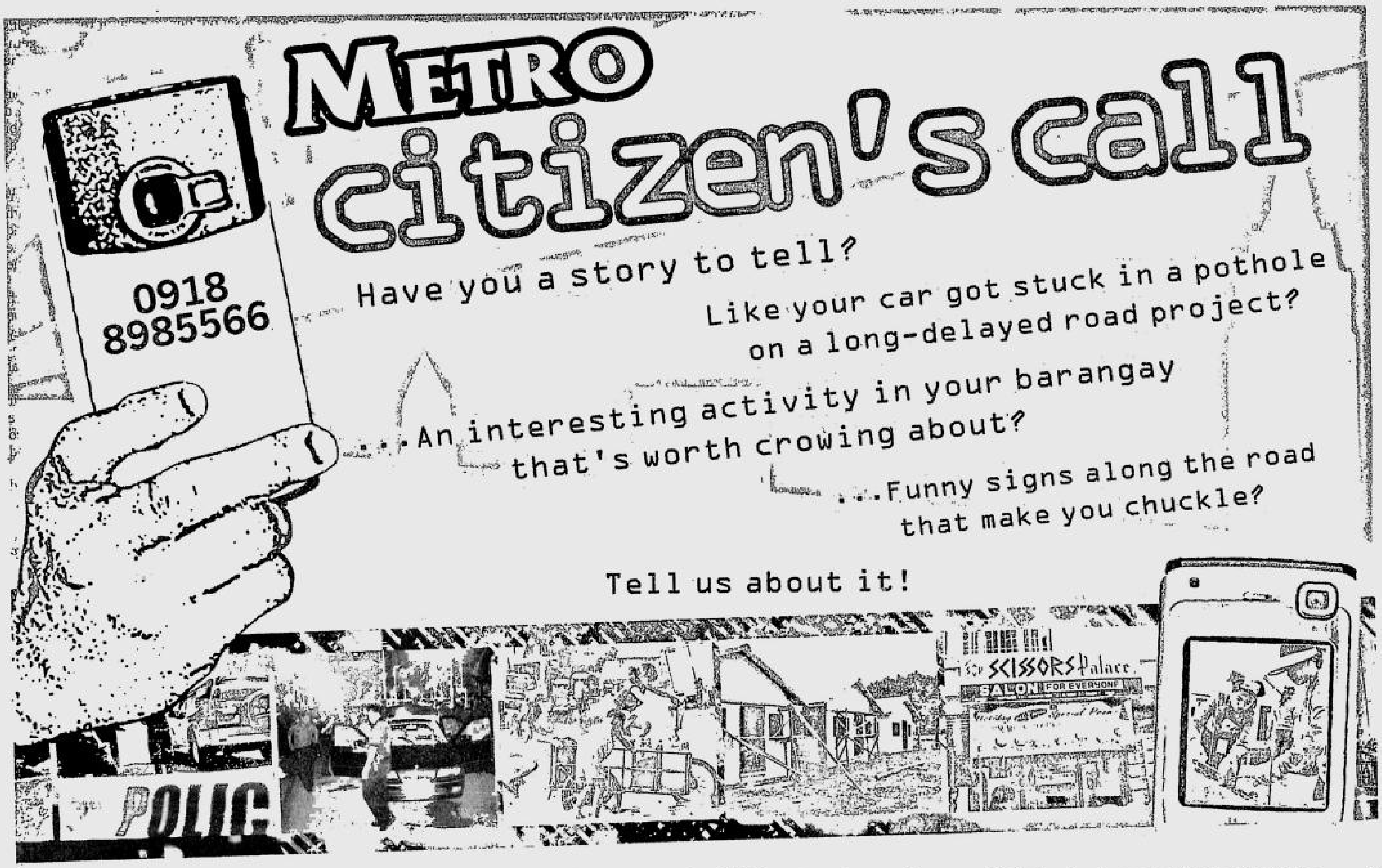
* * *

Senators are barking up the wrong tree in asking for the head of Director General Oscar Calderon, Philippine National Police chief, for the order prohibiting policemen from serving Senate-issued warrants of arrest.

The controversy stemmed from the arrest of Presidential Commission on Good Government Chair Camilo Sabio by some elite cops detailed with the Senate.

Although the order forbidding cops assigned at the Senate to serve Senate-issued warrants came from Calderon, the buck stops at the doorstep of the Commander in Chief, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The President should take the rap, as Calderon was just following orders from her.



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INQUIRER

Sri Lanka says it sank 11 rebel boats in naval clash

COLOMBO—SRI LANKA'S NAVY SANK 11 Tamil Tiger vessels and killed dozens of rebels in a fierce five-hour battle overnight, the military said on Monday, a fortnight after the foes agreed to resume peace talks to halt renewed civil war.

The navy believes a top Tiger naval commander was killed or injured during the clash at sea around 80 km north of the strategic northeastern harbor of Trincomalee—one of the most serious naval battles since a 2002 ceasefire that now lies in tatters.

"There were 25 Sea Tiger boats sailing south. Eleven boats were sunk, and about 70 cadres were killed," said Chief Inspector of Police Percy Perera of the Center for National Security. He said five navy sailors were hurt in the clash.

"Fourteen Tiger craft fled toward (their northeastern base at) Mullaithivu, five of those boats on tow," he added. "They were trying to bring in reinforcements and weapons."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were not immediately available for comment on the incident, which comes days after a suspected rebel front threatened to recapture recently lost territory on the southern lip of Trincomalee harbor.

However, the Tigers have denied any involvement in the distribution of leaflets warning residents to leave immediately ahead of a rebel offensive.

Thousands of Muslims driven away by fighting in August have fled their homes for the second time in as many months in the wake of the threat, and aid workers say the military is preventing thousands more from leaving the area.

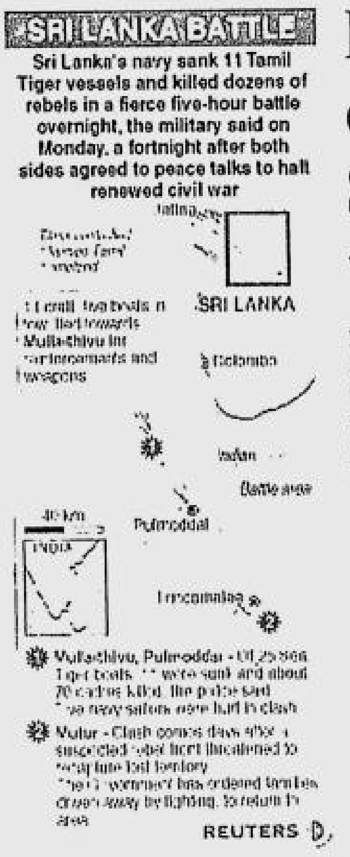
The government has ordered families who spent weeks in emergency shelters and schools in nearby towns to return to the Mutur area, and has closed down and cleared away refugee camps that local communities said were disrupting their lives.

With sporadic fighting and shelling continuing nearby, aid workers said the resettlement was done too soon.

"The haste in resettlement was obviously to show the world that the Sri Lankan government is in control of Mutur," the rebels said on their official website www.ltteps.org, accusing the military of printing the warning leaflets as a ruse.

The Tigers and the government have both told peace broker Norway they are prepared to meet for talks after a five-month deadlock to end a new chapter of civil war that has killed hundreds of civilians, troops and rebels since late July.

However, analysts and diplomats are skeptical the talks will actually happen, and fear a war that has killed more than 65,000 people since 1983 will grind on unless the two sides address the core issues: Human rights abuses by both sides and the rebels' central demand for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east. *Reuters*



Sri Lanka's navy sank 11 Tamil Tiger vessels and killed dozens of rebels in a fierce five-hour battle overnight, the military said on Monday, a fortnight after both sides agreed to peace talks to halt renewed civil war

Islamists capture Somalia's third city

KISMAYO, SOMALIA—ISLAMIST forces with machine guns mounted on pickup trucks took over the strategic Somali port of Kismayo overnight on Monday without firing a shot, extending their grip on the south, witnesses said.

Crowds gathered from early morning to watch the Islamist fighters who had ridden into the port, the Horn of Africa nation's third largest city which lies near the Kenya border.

The warlord in charge of the region fled late on Sunday.

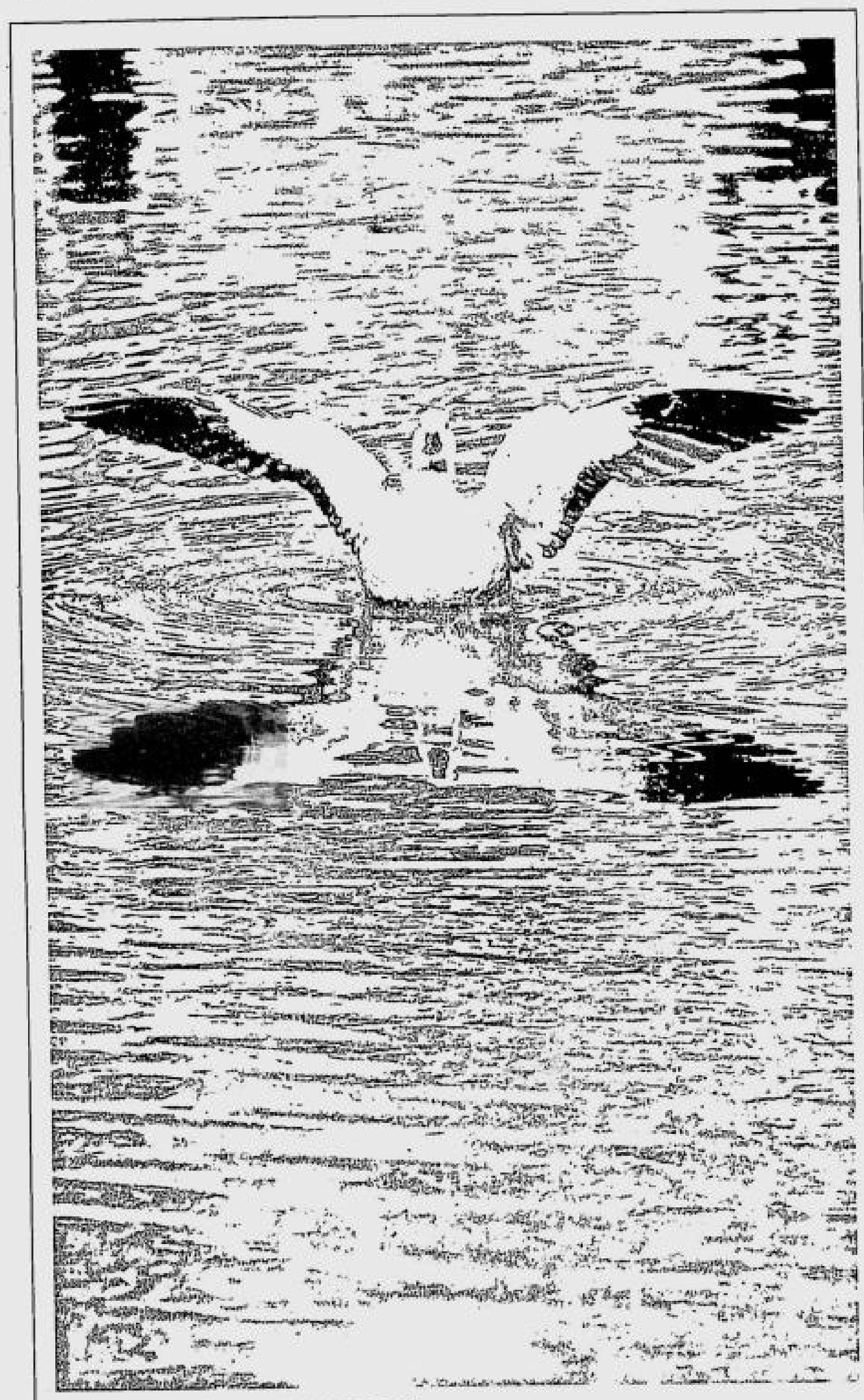
Col. Abdikadir Adan Shire, also known as Barre Hiraale, is defense minister in Somalia's weak interim government and led the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA), an independent authority that has controlled the region around Kismayo.

JVA authorities put up no resistance to the Islamists, some immediately promising to work with them.

"I am happy for the new change, I welcome it. The chief of police and myself will work with the Islamic Courts' Union," Abdi Mohamed, Kismayo deputy police chief, told Reuters.

Barre Hiraale's hasty exit on Sunday followed a split within the Alliance on how to respond to the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which seized Mogadishu and other parts of southern and central Somalia earlier this year.

The Islamists' advances since June have challenged the aspirations of the Western-backed interim government of President Abdullahi Yusuf which aims to restore central rule for the first time since warlords ousted a dictator in 1991. *Reuters*



INDIAN SUMMER IN MOSCOW
A duck stretches its wings on a pond with reflections of autumn trees in central Moscow, Sept. 24. It is an unusual warm Indian summer in Russian capital, with the temperature at 22 degrees Centigrade in central Moscow. AFP

Swiss voters approve tougher asylum barriers

BERNE—NEUTRAL SWITZERLAND, home to humanitarian agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, voted by a big majority on Sunday to make it harder for asylum-seekers to gain entry to the rich Alpine state.

Despite warnings of damage to the country's humanitarian reputation, 68 percent of voters said 'yes' in referendums on changes to Swiss asylum rules making them among the West's toughest and on limiting access for non-European job-seekers.

Voters accepted the arguments of right-wing Justice Minister Christoph Blocher that the new regulations, featuring a requirement that all asylum-seekers have a passport, were necessary to fight alleged abuse.

"The people have said they do not want abuse (of the system) but they want to maintain the humanitarian traditions of Switzerland," Blocher told TSR television. The minister says less than half of asylum requests turn out to be valid.

According to his ministry, the two law changes won 68 percent backing. Both measures have already been passed by parliament and the government, but opponents raised enough signatures to force a national vote.

It is the latest move by an industrial power—Britain is among others—to raise barriers against asylum as part of a crackdown on illegal immigration.

"Obviously we are disappointed, but we knew it would be difficult," said Thomas Christen, secretary general of the Swiss Socialist Party, one of the few parties to oppose the changes. *Reuters*

Blair shies away from backing Brown

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND—BRITISH Prime Minister Tony Blair refused Sunday to publicly back Finance Minister Gordon Brown as his successor, as the Labour Party conference opened with calls for unity and fresh focus.

In-fighting over exactly when Brown will be given the country's top job led to a damaging row earlier this month, with lawmakers loyal to the chancellor of the exchequer forcing Blair to say he would be gone within a year.

But pressed in a BBC television interview on whether he would endorse Brown to the 12,000 Labour delegates here this week, Blair—who has said his effective number two would be a "brilliant" leader—demurred.

"I'm not getting into the leadership contest and all of the rest of it. Gordon has been a fantastic chancellor. He's been a great servant of the country and the party," he said.

"I don't resile from anything I've said but this week I'm talking to the public about the public's concerns."

Indications Blair and Brown may have put their heads together to avoid the prime minister's last annual congress as Labour leader being dominated by the succession issue came with a strong show from senior government ministers.

BLAIR AFP

Blair—due to speak here Tuesday—raised the need to "reconnect" with voters, saying the party "went Awol (absent without leave)" from the public during the succession row, causing widespread anger among Labour grass roots.

By concentrating on people's concerns, he added, Labour would be returned to power at the next general election, due before 2010 at the latest but would not if it continued its internal disputes.

"Both of us realize ... that the most important thing is that this week we set out our agenda for the future. It's important the two of us work together with the rest of the Cabinet for the future," Blair said.

For his part, Brown set out his stall in a series of newspaper interviews and on television, speaking of the need for "new politics," with greater parliamentary and public accountability plus devolution of centralized power.

That could include changing the running of Britain's public National Health Service in the same way that he handed the power to set interest rates from the executive to Britain's central bank, the Bank of England, in 1997, he added.

Brown—who gives a keynote speech here Monday—said there would be continuity in areas like foreign policy and London's relationship with Washington, but played down Blair's refusal to give him public backing.

Opening the conference, the chair of Labour's ruling National Executive Committee, Jeremy Beecham, also admitted the past few weeks had damaged the party's standing.

To cheers and applause, he told Labour lawmakers behind the letters circulating earlier this month questioning Blair's fitness to lead: "A period of silence from you would be welcome." *AFP*

On Malaysian roads, thrills, spills and 17 deaths daily

By Jahabar Sadiq

KUALA LUMPUR—MALAYSIA'S neurosurgeons, bartenders and nightclub bouncers all have something in common: They are all busiest on weekends.

Every weekend, neurosurgeons here operate on hundreds of motorcyclists, car drivers and passengers brought into hospital emergency rooms with head injuries suffered on some of the world's most dangerous roads.

Many of them do not survive and join a toll of about 17 people killed on average every day on Malaysia's roads.

"Cancer and HIV-AIDS might hog the headlines but road accidents are the biggest killer in Malaysia," Kuala Lumpur neurosurgeon Prof. Vickneswaran Mathaneswaran told Reuters.

That figure translates to an average of 4.2 deaths per 10,000 registered vehicles and ranks Malaysia as the 30th most-dangerous country in terms of fatal road accidents, according to UN data.

Malaysia has built a web of high-speed motorways over the past 20 years as it races toward its goal of developed-country status by 2020, but road safety is still stuck in the slow lane.

Overcrowded cars hurtle along roads at more than 100 kph. Rarely are the occupants buckled. Toddlers often crawl around unrestrained in the front passenger seat.

Motorcyclists take the most risks, weaving through city traffic at high speed, their helmets unfastened if worn at all.

In 2005, 6,188 people died in road accidents in Malaysia, 60 percent of them motorcyclists. In the first half of 2006 alone, 3,137 people were killed with 1,818 being either motorcyclists or pillion riders.

Most accidents are unrelated to alcohol abuse. Young male motorcyclists are often high on nothing more than adrenaline.

"It is exhilarating to race down a road. All I need is just a few ringgit for fuel and I can have the time of my life," dispatch rider Amir Fairuz told Reuters as he prepared for an illegal street race on a Friday night.

He is among the hundreds of motorcyclists who gather every weekend in Kuala Lumpur to race each other or just roam in packs along expressways and city streets, performing dangerous tricks at high speed, some of them without helmets.

Illegal racers dice with death in the hope of winning up to 3,000 ringgit ($816) in prize money or sometimes a girl for the night.

For some of these hard-core dare-devils, taking drugs is standard before pushing their cheap bikes beyond the limit, reaching speeds of around 160 kph.

Some of these young men end up in the care of neurosurgeon Mathaneswaran, whose facility treats about 100 accident cases a month. He is frustrated at such preventable suffering.

"The vaccine is simple. It is road safety," he said.

But Malaysia's road safety director, Suret Singh, said curbing road accidents needs a comprehensive approach.

"They are the young and the reckless. We need to instill road safety culture in them," Singh told Reuters in an interview.

Authorities plan to spend some 100 million ringgit up to 2010 to create road safety awareness.

An immediate plan to drive down the death rate is to issue a million crash helmets to youths and those too poor to afford them, particularly in rural areas where enforcement is low.

Crash helmets are mandatory by law but they are rarely seen on motorcyclists outside urban areas.

The government has also launched an awareness campaign on television, print media and billboards to get motorists to belt up in vehicles and to strap on helmets while astride motorcycles.

The awareness campaign is among 52 programs for road safety over the next five years, Singh said, adding a nationwide camera surveillance system was also planned for early 2007 to get motorists to obey traffic rules.

Research from Malaysia's Universiti Putra shows most road-users only complied with traffic rules to avoid being caught by police rather than for safety concerns.

"We want to change the road users' mind-set," Singh said, adding the ultimate goal was to reduce the number of road deaths from 4.2 per 10,000 registered vehicles in 2005 to 2.0 in 2010.

The statistics also show that most of those injured or killed are youths aged between 16 and 25, the most productive time of life, he added. Each death, he said, cost the country about 1.2 million ringgit and totaled some 9 billion ringgit a year. *Reuters*

1M killed each year in traffic worldwide

TWENTY-FIVE MILLION PEOPLE have died on the world's roads since the first recorded automobile fatality occurred in London in 1896, the World Health Organization said.

Here is an overview of how road deaths have risen to currently kill more than 1 million people annually.

A huge public health problem:

- Road traffic crashes kill an average of 3,242 people every day, or 1.2 million a year, the WHO said in its 2004 Road Traffic Injury Prevention report.
- The 11th leading cause of death globally, crashes injure between 20 and 50 million people a year.

The world's safest, and most dangerous, countries:

- Africa has the world's worst death rate from road crashes, with 28 deaths per 100,000 population, said the WHO.
- Britain has the safest roads in the world, the British Medical Journal (BMJ) reported in 2004, in terms both of deaths per capita and of deaths per kilometer travelled.
- Some 5.9 people out of every 100,000 are killed on British roads each year, compared with 11 in the European Union, 8.2 in Japan, 15.2 in the United States and 25 in Malaysia.

Who is most at risk?

- Ninety percent of traffic deaths happen in low- and middle-income countries. The BMJ says better trauma care has reduced the death toll in most developed countries.
- Just under three quarters—73 percent—of all road traffic fatalities are male. More than half are young adults aged between 15 and 44.

Economic costs:

- The costs of road traffic accidents are estimated at $518 billion globally and $65 billion in low- and middle-income countries. *Reuters*

World skeptical of Bin Laden 'death'

PARIS—A FRENCH INTELLIGENCE MEMO SUGgesting al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden might have died of typhoid has been met with skepticism around the world, including the highest levels of the French government.

France, the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia all said they had no evidence to support the assertion in the memo, which was published Saturday in the French regional newspaper l'Est Republicain and Sunday in Le Parisien.

"To my knowledge, Osama bin Laden is not dead. It is quite simple," French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy told French television on Sunday.

French President Jacques Chirac on Saturday confirmed the memo was genuine, stating he was "surprised" it had been made public and ordering an investigation into its leak.

But he stressed that the information it gave was "in no way confirmed."

However, persistent reports that Bin Laden was struck with illness fueled speculation about his fate.

The confidential document, drafted by the French foreign intelligence service DGSE and dated Sept. 21, stated that according to a normally reliable source Saudi Arabia's intelligence services were "convinced that Osama bin Laden is dead."

It said the 49-year-old Saudi Islamic militant, who has been held responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, succumbed to typhoid fever in Pakistan between Aug. 23 and Sept. 4.

The Saudis were seeking evidence of Bin Laden's death, notably by looking for his remains, the memo said.

In response, the Saudi Embassy in Washington issued a two-sentence statement saying "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has no evidence to support recent media reports that Osama bin Laden is dead."

"Information that has been reported otherwise is purely speculative and cannot be independently verified," the statement stressed.

It did not, however, address the French intelligence memo nor say whether its evaluation of what Saudi intelligence believed was inaccurate.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice simply said: "No comment, and no knowledge."

Several US intelligence officials told US media they had noticed no unusual Internet or communications "chatter" which would likely follow such a momentous development.

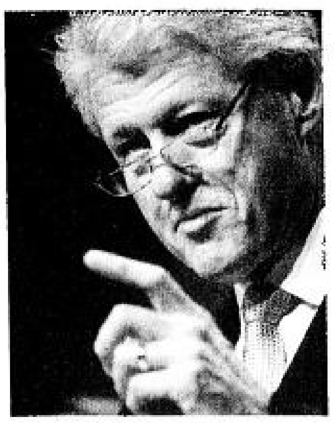
Pakistan's interior minister, Aftab Sherpao, told AFP in Islamabad: "No, we do not have any such information with us."

Security officials hunting al-Qaida in Pakistan rejected the report. A senior official told AFP on condition of anonymity that "no such information has been shared" by the Saudis and that it was "inconceivable that an event of this nature would remain unnoticed in Pakistan."

Bin Laden has several times been rumored to have died in the past, only to appear later in audio or video recordings.

The last verified message from Bin Laden was posted on the Internet on July 1, accusing Iraqi Shiites of waging "genocide" against Sunnis. A US official said the message was deemed authentic. *AFP*

Clinton: I worked hard to have Osama killed


CLINTON REUTERS

NEW YORK—IN A COMBATIVE television interview on "Fox News Sunday," former President Bill Clinton defended his handling of the threat posed by Osama bin Laden, saying he tried to have Bin Laden killed and was attacked for his efforts by the same people who now criticize him for not doing enough.

"That's the difference in me and some, including all of the right-wingers who are attacking me now," Clinton said in the interview. "They ridiculed me for trying. They had eight months to try, they did not try."

Clinton accused host Chris Wallace of a "conservative hit job" and asked: "I want to know how many people in the Bush administration you asked, 'Why didn't you do anything about the Cole?' I want to know how many people you asked, 'Why did you fire Dick Clarke?'"

He was referring to the USS Cole, attacked by terrorists off the coast of Yemen in 2000, and former White House antiterrorism chief Richard A. Clarke.

Wallace said Sunday he was surprised by Clinton's "conspiratorial view" of "a very non-confrontational question, 'Did you do enough to connect the dots and go after al-Qaida?'"

"All I did was ask him a question, and I think it was a legitimate news question. I was surprised that he would conjure up that this was a hit job," Wallace said in a telephone interview.

Clinton said he "worked hard" to try to kill Bin Laden.

"We contracted with people to kill him. I got closer to killing him than anybody's gotten since," he said.

He told Wallace, "And you got that little smirk on your face and you think you're so clever, but I had responsibility for trying to protect this country. I tried and I failed to get Bin Laden. I regret it, but I did try and I did everything I thought I responsibly could." *AP*

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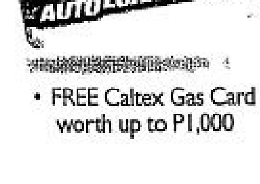

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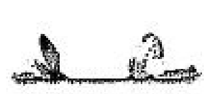

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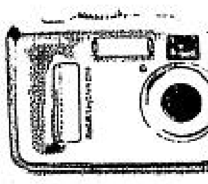

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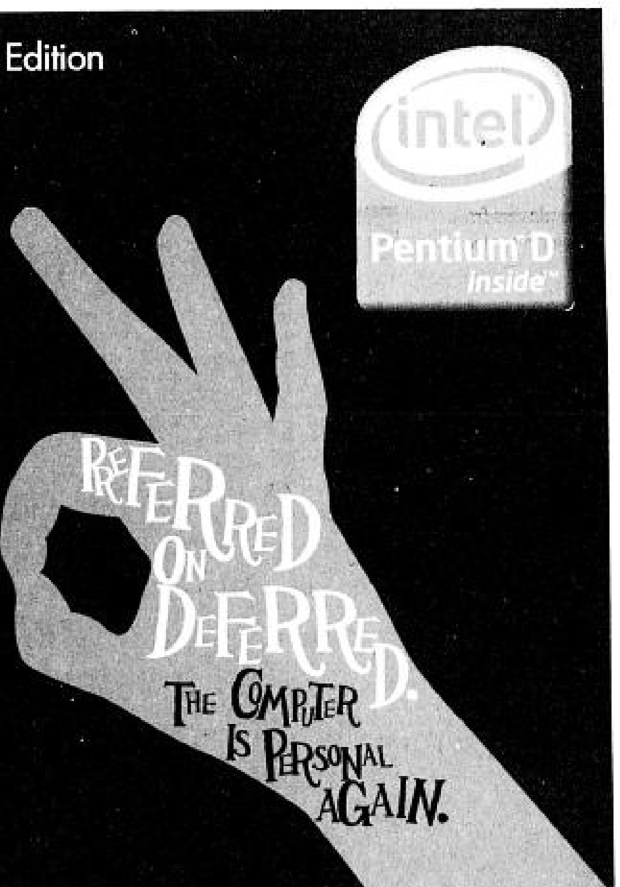

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Old Black magic works for Eagles/A22

■ Europe win vindicates Woosnam/A23

Roach as Pacquiao trainer-manager?

'Filipino ring hero open to idea'

SHELLY FINKEL, ET AL., WATCH out. Rex "Wakee" Salud, move over.

World-renowned American trainer Freddie Roach—a well-loved boxing figure known for his integrity—is reportedly tired of having to deal with all the in-fighting and being a trouble-shooter, and now wants to become more involved in the career of Filipino icon Manny Pacquiao by becoming his new manager.

Pacquiao's contract with Finkel's management group that also includes Keith Davidson and Nick Khan will expire next year, and Roach is said to be casting a keen eye on the plum job.

"Freddie is sick and tired of all the infighting they have gone through, first with Murad Muhammad and now with Shelly Finkel and his group," a well-placed source close to Roach told Michael Marley, a US lawyer and columnist for fightnightnews.com.

"Freddie is tired of putting out fires about where PacMan sleeps or of what kind of gloves he will use in a fight," the source added. "Freddie signed only as the trainer but he feels he has been acting as manager without being paid accordingly."

Roach earlier raised eyebrows in the boxing community when he decided to handle the affairs of Filipino boxer Diosdado Gabi. The boxer was Roach's first ward as a boxing manager.

According to the source, the Pacquiao-Roach deal will be announced after the Filipino's Nov. 18 fight with Mexico's Erik Morales.

Pacquiao and Roach are said to have been talking about Roach's offer to handle the dual jobs of trainer and manager, with the American taking 20 to 25 percent of the Filipino's purses.

"Pacman likes the idea," Marley quoted the source as saying. "Freddie is the one who analyzes the opponents and who brings in sparring partners.

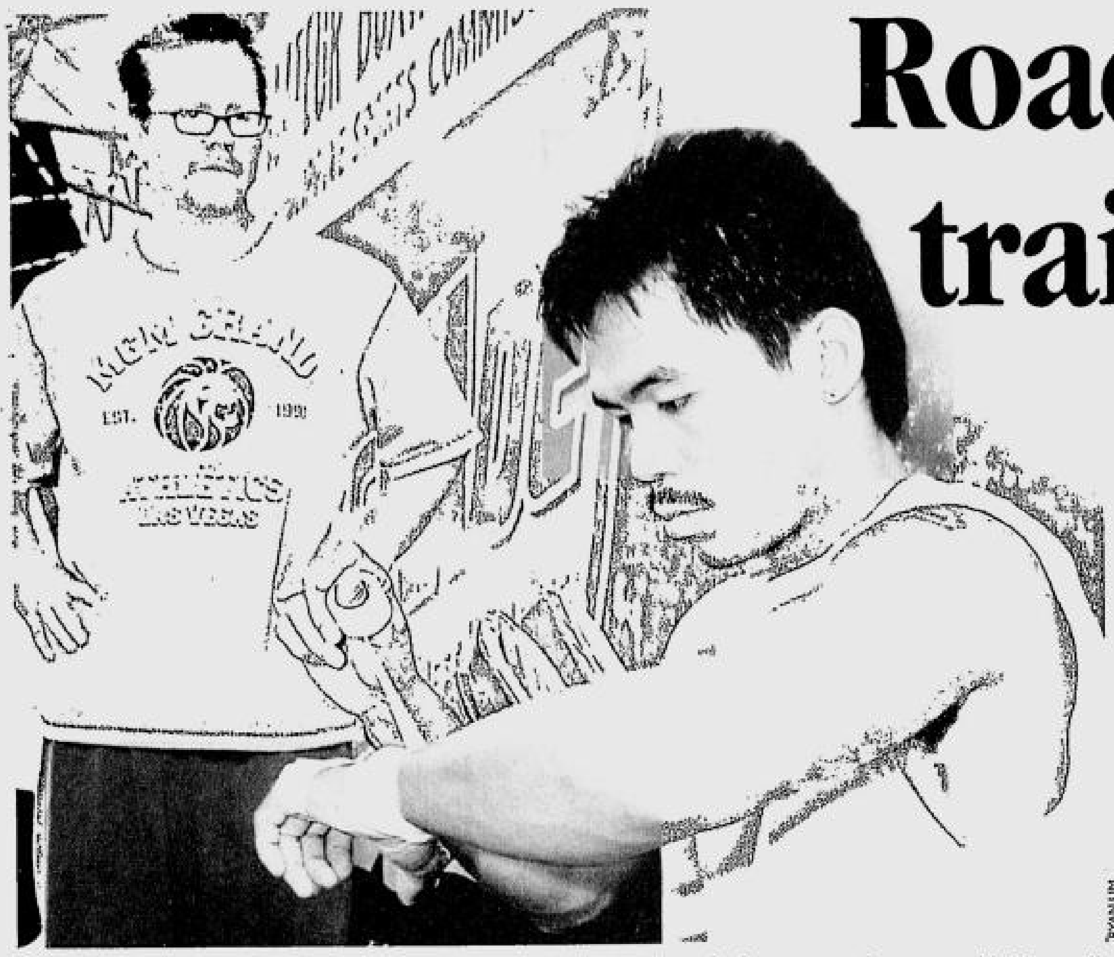
"He is, maybe, the only boxing guy who has never pissed Manny off. They've had arguments, yes, but never a big blowup where one or both of them stayed mad overnight.

"Pacman knows that Freddie only gets pissed off at him when he starts slackening up in the gym or is doing things he's not supposed to be doing."

Pacquiao, according to the arrangement, will still hire a lawyer to review his fight contracts, whether he goes with Golden Boy or Top Rank after his November bout with Morales.

"But make no mistake, the man driving the Pacman bus the rest of Manny's limited (in time) career will be Freddie Roach," the source said.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor



RYAN LIM

TRUSTING PARTNERS: Freddie Roach (left) and Manny Pacquiao "have had arguments, but never a big blowup."

Pay cuts keep Ginebra Kings free of sticky salary issues

By Francis Ochoa

THE FINAL OBSTACLE to BARANGAY GINEBRA'S FIELDING OF A POWer roster in the 2006-07 Philippine Basketball Association season has been removed.

Four players from the Kings' retooled lineup have accepted pay cuts that will allow the crowd-favorites to avoid salary cap issues this year, team manager Allan Caidic revealed yesterday.

"The guys just want to play basketball," Caidic told the INQUIRER. "And among the things they were willing to sacrifice was their salaries."

Mainstays Andy Seigle and Rodney Santos agreed to lower salaries, citing the fact that both were coming off an injury-riddled season and that the Kings were hard-pressed to go under the P30-million cap after acquiring three marquee players in a blockbuster off-season trade.

Rudy Hatfield, one of those the Kings absorbed during that trade, also took a "significant pay cut" from his previous contract with the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Free-agent acquisition Johnny Abarrientos also agreed to a pact "much lower" than his last deal.

Caidic said he appreciated the sacrifices of the four during contract negotiations, citing the case of Seigle, who used to receive the maximum P350,000 monthly pay in his previous contract with the Kings.

"Andy also realized he has a lot to prove because, like Rodney, he was coming off an injury," Caidic said.

No details were given yesterday, although Caidic said that after all the negotiations were completed, the Kings were left with enough elbow room in the cap to avoid complications later on.

"Rudy and Johnny were on the same boat," Caidic said. "They just wanted to

PAY/A22

PBA ready to form national team again A22

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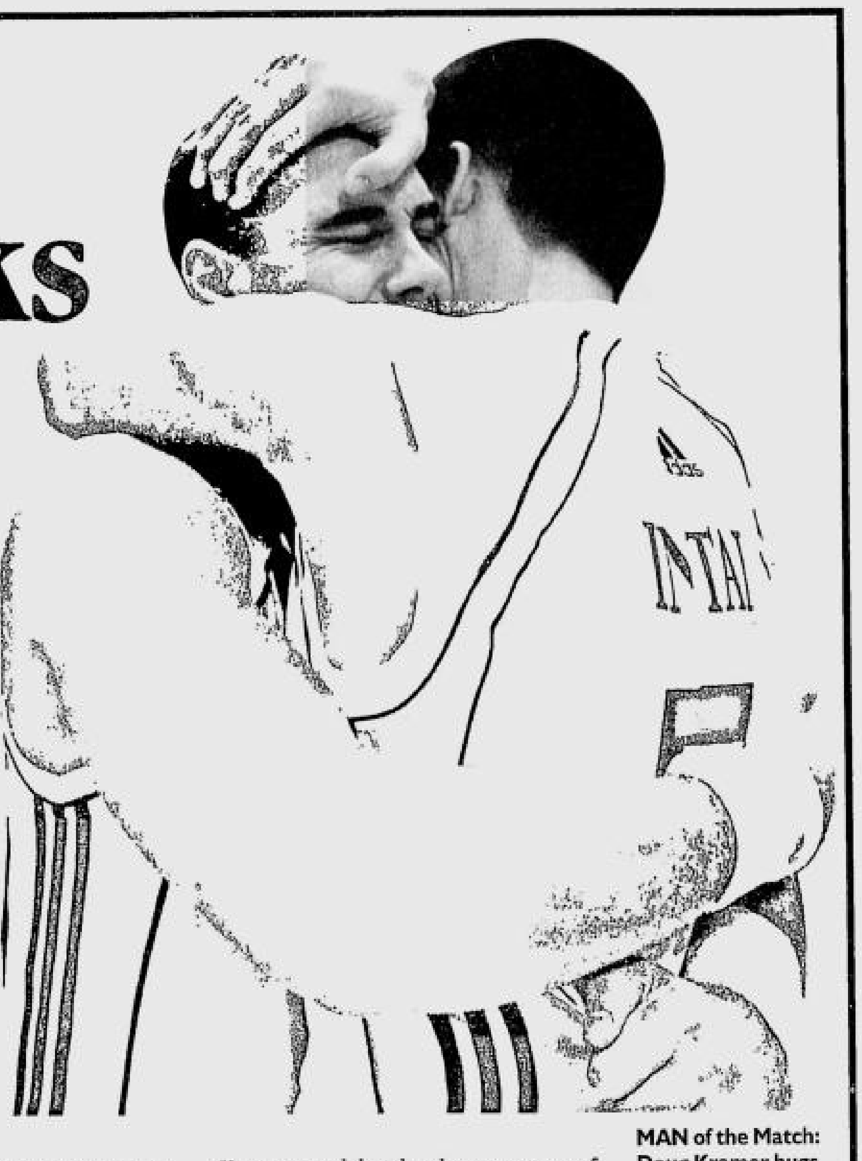
Old Black magic works for Eagles



MAN of the Match: Doug Kramer hugs JC Intal after scoring the winning basket with one second left in Game 1 of the Finals.
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

By Jasmine W. Payo

"A GAME CAN BE WON IN LESS THAN ONE second, so I never gave up hope that we can win the game if we could execute."

Ateneo coach Norman Black said this yesterday as he looked back at the gem of a play in the final second that lifted the Blue Eagles past the University of Santo Tomas Tigers, 73-72, in Game 1 of the UAAP men's basketball championship series Sunday.

With the Tigers all set to celebrate what looked like a sure win, Macky Escalona, inbounding from halfcourt, found Doug Kramer free under the basket and the Ateneo center turned around and buried the shot that broke the Tigers' brave hearts.

Now it's all even. UST may have stopped Ateneo's bid for a record nine straight victory in the eliminations, but the Eagles have exacted revenge on the Tigers. More importantly, the Eagles only have to win on Thursday to clinch the title.

Black, who furiously mapped the final strategy to his boys in the game's final timeout, said he had pulled off one such play in the PBA, where he won 10 championships, including a grand slam with San Miguel Beer in 1989.

"We actually won a game with that play in San Miguel and I just happened to think about it," said Black. "With only one second left on the clock, I knew if we tried to get the ball to Chris Tiu everybody was just going to switch and double-team him. I was just hoping they would leave Doug Kramer alone, and they did."

The escape act was the latest in a series of close calls the Eagles have weathered in their campaign as the top team in the eliminations.

Kramer played the hero's role to the hilt.

"I actually wanted the ball in my hands, I knew the game wasn't over," said Kramer. "After Coach designed the play for me, I started to pray to God. I asked Him to lay His hand upon me and give me the confidence and composure I need to make the shot."

"I was a bit nervous, but after I prayed I actually felt so confident and optimistic that things would go our way," said the 6-foot-4 Kramer.

Kramer noted that the play was a team effort. Also on the floor with Kramer and Escalona were Jai Reyes, JC Intal and the clutch-shooting Tiu, who served as decoy.

"Coach said that Macky made a great pass and I made a great shot," said the 23-year-old Kramer, who is majoring in interdisciplinary studies.

Cage body gets SEC nod; congress rescheduled

By Francis Ochoa and Marc Anthony Reyes

OPTIMISTIC THAT A UNIFIED BASKETBALL federation will move forward despite the obstacles that have hit the newly formed association, the Philippine Basketball Association will reassemble the national pool in January to prepare for several international meets.

This developed as the new group, known as the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP), rescheduled a national congress that had been slated Wednesday, a move seen as a minor setback in its bid to regain recognition from the international basketball federation (Fiba).

"We will regroup the national pool by January so we can pursue our commitments to the national squad," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala yesterday, adding that he doesn't see the postponement of the congress as a hindrance to the group's bid to gain Fiba recognition.

"At the very least, the group will be able to show the Fiba that a new association has been formed and the major stakeholders of basketball in the country are part of it," said Eala.

The rescheduling of the congress leaves the SBP without a set of officers, five days before the Sept. 30 deadline set by the Fiba.

The SBP gained a major point yesterday when it was granted a Securities and Exchange Commission registration after it submitted its constitution and by-laws there.

"It's a major step for SBP as we seek POC recognition," said BAP president Joey Lina, who remained confident the new basketball group will meet its self-imposed deadline. *With a report from Musong R. Castillo*

Pay cuts keep Kings free of salary issues

From page A21

get things over and done with so we can start preparing for the season.

"Because of [the pay] cuts, we were able to get enough cushion to stay under the salary cap."

A source inside the Ginebra camp said the Kings may have a few complications when Santos is reactivated sometime this November, but added that the team was willing to play with 11 men if it ever comes to that.

"Even with Rodney around, they should clear the cap easily with the pay cuts the players took," said the source.

Concerns arose when Ginebra agreed to a blockbuster trade that brought Hatfield, Rafi Reavis and Billy Mamaril to a side that already includes Erik Menk, Mark Caguioa and Jayjay Helterbrand.

That, plus the signing of the veteran Abarrientos, a former league Most Valuable Player, put the Kings under close salary cap scrutiny.

This is the second time Caidic is involved in a "pay-cut scheme" to help the team fit under the cap. In 1994, when he was still playing, Caidic joined a star-studded San Miguel squad whose key mainstays, like Hector Calma and Samboy Lim, took salay cuts to accommodate the entry of "The Triggerman."

SPORTSWATCH

Cebuana Lhuillier Sluggers clinch 2nd in Asia slo-pitch

TEAM CEBUANA LHUILLIER YIELDED TO TOP seed Dong Hua, 12-4, in their second finals encounter on Sunday afternoon to settle for second place in the 7th Asia Taiwan International Slo-Pitch Softball Tournament in Taipei. The Cebuana Sluggers routed Dong Hua, 15-6, in their first finals showdown in the morning to arrange the winner-take-all affair for the title of the eight-team tournament. A solid fourth inning, where Julius Visaya hit a three-run homer, opened up the game while Manuel Binarao and Alex Estipular scored two runs each in the next innings to seal Team Cebuana's victory. Dong Hua, powered by professional players from the Chinese leagues, gained the twice-to-beat advantage after handing the Filipinos a 10-7 beating in the elimination round that ended Saturday. Team Cebuana advanced to the finals by winning over Fu Sheng twice and USA Aces once (12-6). Cebuana's Uly Mejia was awarded Most Skilled Player while teammate Apol Rosales emerged Home Run King. The Filipinos are led by playing team owner Jean Henri Lhuillier.

Codiñera chess Saturday

THE 14TH ANNUAL CODIÑERA CHESS FESTIval gets under way at 11 a.m. this Saturday at the lower second floor of St. Francis Square, at the back of SM Megamall, in Mandaluyong City. The tournament, which will run until Oct. 8, is divided into four sections: Open, 2050-below, 1900-below and ladies. The four sections will be held on separate dates with the 2050-below slated on Sept. 30, 1900-below on Oct. 1, ladies on Oct. 7 and Open on Oct. 8. The tournament stakes a cash pot of P50,000 and is being held in memory of the late Crisostomo Codiñera Sr., an avid chess player and former councilor of Nasugbu, Batangas. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top 10 finishers in each section. Registration fee is P250. For inquiries, call the MCC at 826-8560, 0916-6608-712 or 0916-852-1069.

Larry's Cup men grateful

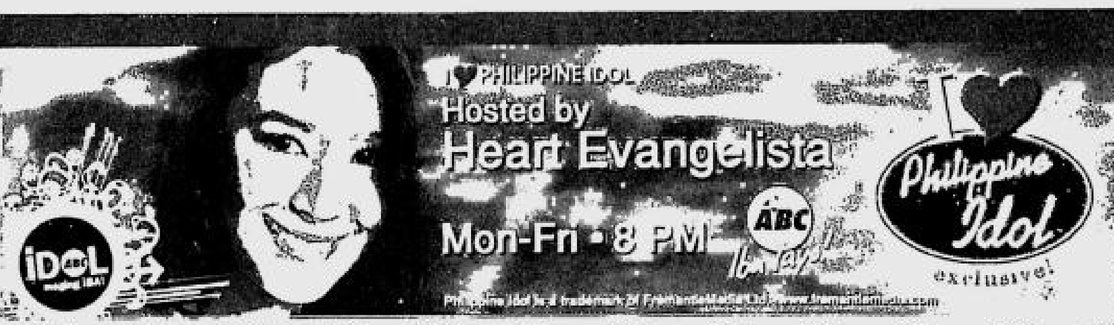
ORGANIZERS OF THE LARRY'S CUP, AN ANNUal charity golf tournament, have thanked Wack Wack Golf and Country Club for allowing the staging of the event at the venue's all-weather West course. Organizing committee chair Mark Mendoza thanked Wack Wack president Benjamin Abalos Sr. and the members of the venue's board for supporting the event founded to help two foundations—Lambunao National Foundation Inc. and Ramendo Livelihood and Educational Foundation Inc. The tournament fires off on Thursday with a field of more than 250 players. Participants can either tee off in the morning or afternoon. A brand new Toyota Vios and two golf carts are up for grabs as main hole-in-one prizes.

Stagfest at Roligon today

EIGHTY COCKERS PLUNGE INTO ACTION starting at 4 p.m. today in the opening round of Roligon Mega Cockpit's annual blockbuster "Stag Festival" 5-stag derby. The event, hosted by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon and mainly sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone, will have its second round on Thursday and the finals on Saturday. Those wishing to join the second round must submit entries tomorrow, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Stags with "Showdown Derby" wingbands (classified as Y and R) will be accepted. Meanwhile, the screening of stags is now ongoing in connection with the "Diamante Brothers 5-Stag Derby" on Oct. 14, 16 and 18. For appointment on farm-to-farm screening, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Tuesday, September 26, 2006



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ABC 5	Nickelodeon				Legend Of Shaolin Kung Fu	Mon Colle Night	Sentro Headlines	Letty La Mas Fea		Doble Cara		Philippine Idol	Ultimate Guinness World Records		ALI		Big News	Fear Factor	
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AXN		House (Season II)		Worst Case Scenario		The Ultimate Fighter (Season II)		Alias (Season IV)		Maximum Exposure (Season I)		Worlds Apart		Sports Disaster IV		Las Vegas (Season 2)		Numb3rs (Season 2)	
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Cinema One		Bukas May Pangarap...				Hindi Mo Ako Kayang Tapakan				Anak ni Baby Ama				Bakit Di Totohanin				Tatapatan Ko Ang Lakas Mo	
Cinemax	The Wild Bunch (2:30 PM)					Blood Justice (4:55 PM)			A Nightmare On Elm Street Part 2 Freddy's Revenge			Battlestar Galactica (Season 1)			The Shadow (9:35 PM)			Life Without Dick (11:10 PM)	
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GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		Bakekang (8:50 PM)	Love Story In Harvard	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
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Star Movies	Being Julia			The Dead Will Tell (4:15 PM)			Solo (5:45 PM)				Undercover Brother			The Thin Red Line					
Star World	Miss World 2006	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	One Tree Hill		Desperate Housewives		Kevin Hill		Seinfeld	One Tree Hill
Studio 23		Yu-Gi-Oh				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Blog	Pinoy Dream Academy	Wazzup Wazzup	High School Reunion	Smallville (8:15 PM)		Gilmore Girls		News Central	Crash (10:45PM)		MYXlog

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Tiger hurt by under-performance

STRAFFAN, IRELAND—TIGER WOODS HAS admitted that he is pained by his record of under-performance in Ryder Cups after being part of an American team that was whipped by a record-equaling margin at the K Club.

The world number one was a pale shadow of his normal self as he struggled over the first two days of fourballs and foursomes.

And although he finished the match with three points from a possible five by beating Robert Karlsson three and two in Sunday's singles, he suggested that was scant consolation.

Woods has now ended up on the winning side in only one of the five transatlantic matches he has played in and he admitted: "It doesn't sit well nor should it."

Woods added: "We went out and they just outplayed us. What it comes down to is whoever plays the 18th the best and who makes most putts for the week, and the Europeans did better on both of those."

Woods' six birdies on the final day—twice the total he had managed in two fourball outings with Jim Furyk on Friday and Saturday—told their own story about the problems he has in adapting to team golf.

Back in splendid isolation, Woods looked once more like the player who has won 12 major titles and put together a scarcely credible run of five consecutive tournament victories in the buildup to this week.

Sunday's win means Woods has now played a total of 25 Ryder Cup matches, won only 10 of them, halved two and lost 13 — raw figures which suggest whoever replaces Tom Lehman as US captain faces a difficult task in working out how to get the best out of the world's best player in this environment.

One person who believes that may never happen is Butch Harmon, Woods's former coach. "He is not comfortable in a partnership," Harmon said. *AFP*

GLOOMY Tiger Woods (left) and David Toms attend a presscon. AP

Europe win vindicates Woosnam

18.5-9.5 rout of US matches 2004 record

DARREN Clarke (left) celebrates with captain Ian Woosnam on the 16th hole. AFP

STRAFFAN, IRELAND—IAN WOOSNAM HAS revealed how he spent the last 18 months agonizing over whether he would be a successful captain of Europe's Ryder Cup team and hailed his side's crushing victory over the United States as the high point of his life.

Woosnam, who had to deal with a barrage of criticism in the buildup to the match, said Sunday's triumph surpassed the joy he had felt after winning the US Masters in 1991.

"This is the pinnacle of my life," he said. "I have won many tournaments around the world, I've won a major and I've been number one in the world and have to say this is the proudest moment of my life."

Woosnam admitted he had never dared to dream that his side, despite its strength in depth, would be able to repeat the 18.5-9.5 victory that the Europeans had achieved under Bernhard Langer in Detroit in 2004.

"Eighteen months ago, when they asked me to be captain, any victory would be fantastic, and to walk away with the same record Bernhard Langer has, I think is unbelievable.

"I've been worried about it for 18 months because it is an unbelievable responsibility to be a captain. It is all right standing there as a player because the only person you can let down is yourself."

Woosnam's credentials as the right man for the job were called into question by many pundits when he was seen to mishandle the selection of his two wildcard picks, Darren Clarke and Lee Westwood, with Denmark's Thomas Bjorn particularly aggrieved at missing out.

Bjorn was furious that Woosnam had not explained his actions before announcing his decisions and denounced the Welshman as "pathetic" while claiming that other players shared his doubts.

Further misgivings were prompted by Woosnam's sometimes stumbling performances in front of the media and Langer's revelation that he had not been consulted about preparations for this year's match, despite his success two years ago.

As things turned out, Woosnam's judgment as far as Clarke and Westwood are concerned could scarcely have been better and the captain appeared to have secured the total trust of his players.

Clarke and Westwood won both the fourballs they played together and their singles while Westwood helped secure halves in the other two matches he was involved in.

"I've had some criticism over the last few months, but that's gone and past," said Woosnam. "We have got the victory we wanted and I have had 12 tremendous guys to help me."

Colin Montgomerie, now the elder statesman among the European players, said: "The one thing that a team need of a captain is respect and there were 12 members of this team that respected Ian Woosnam as a person and as a captain.

"We wanted to win for him and that's what we do on this team." *AFP*

Russia forges final vs Argentina

NEW YORK—RUSSIA CLAWED ITS way into the Davis Cup final. Argentina skipped.

Dmitry Tursunov won a five-set marathon over Andy Roddick to help Russia beat the United States, 3-2, Sunday and advance to December's final, while Argentina finished off Australia, 5-0.

Tursunov outlasted Roddick, 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 3-6, 17-15, to give the Russians an insurmountable 3-1 lead, prevailing in 4 hours, 48 minutes in a match whose 72 games tied a record for the most in the World Group since the tiebreaker was introduced in 1989.

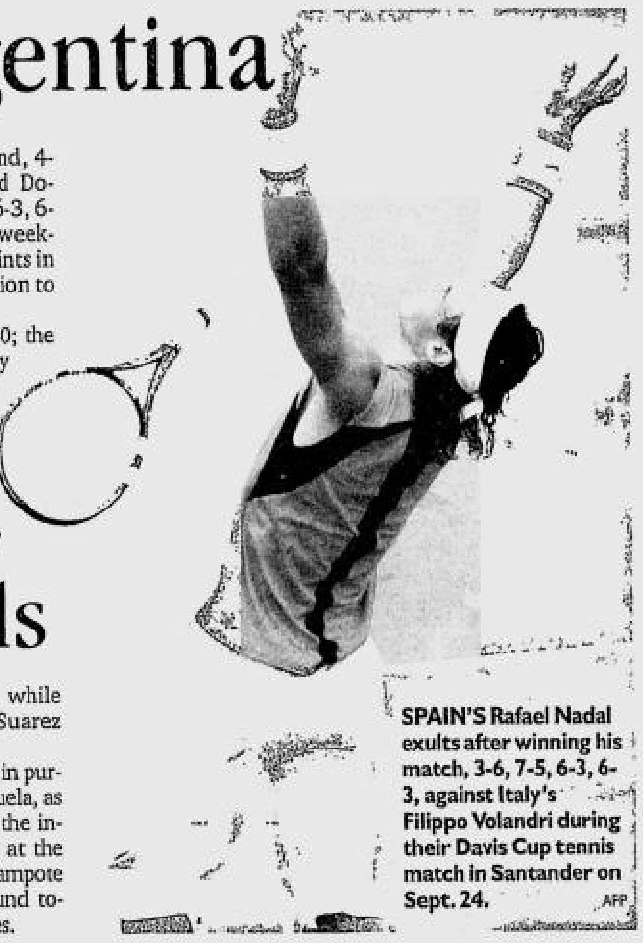
In the final match, James Blake beat Marat Safin, 7-5, 7-6 (4).

The Russians will host Argentina in December in their first Davis Cup final since they beat France in 2002 for their only title. Argentina will play for the title for only the second time, having lost to the Americans in 1981 in its only other appearance in the final.

In World Group qualifying, Roger Federer won his third match in as many days and led Switzerland past Serbia, 4-1, to keep the Swiss in the top tier.

Elsewhere, Romania retained its place by beating South Korea, 4-1; Spain returned Italy to zonal play, 4-1; Germany finished off Thailand, 4-1; and Olivier Rochus defeated Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia, 6-2, 6-3, 6-3, for his third victory of the weekend, earning all of Belgium's points in a 3-2 win that earned it promotion to the World Group.

Austria finished off Mexico, 5-0; the Czechs completed a 4-1 victory over the Netherlands and Robin Soderling beat Ricardo Mello in straight sets while Simon Aspelin and Jonas Bjorkman combined for a doubles victory to rally Sweden to a 2-1 lead over Brazil. *AP*


SPAIN'S Rafael Nadal exults after winning his match, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3, against Italy's Filippo Volandri during their Davis Cup tennis match in Santander on Sept. 24. AFP

King paces World Cup hopefuls

VETERAN INTERNATIONALIST CHESTER King fired a blistering 2604 series in 12 games Sunday to lead 33 others into the second round of the 2006 Bowling World Cup national men's finals at Coronado Lanes (Starlanes).

A member of the Doha Asian Games-bound national team, King averaged 217 to finish ahead of Joonee Gatchalian (2575), Raoul Miranda (2523), Richie Poblete (2506), RJ Bautista (2500) and four-time World Cup champion Paeng Nepomuceno (2495).

Bautista and Nepomuceno shared the men's doubles gold medal in the Busan Asian Games in 2002.

King highlighted his performance with big games of 275, 245 and 242.

Mark Tee, gold medalist in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games here, checked in seventh at 2452, while one-time World Cup titlist C.J. Suarez ranked 14th at 2413.

The 34 ladies and 34 men still in pursuit of the trip to Caracas, Venezuela, as the country's representatives in the international finals set Nov. 4-10 at the 40-lane Centro National de Mampote will compete in the second round tomorrow at Paeng's Midtown lanes.

Webb nips Sorenstam for 4th title

DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA—KARRIE Webb held off a surging Annika Sorenstam here Sunday to win the $1.1-million Longs Drugs Challenge by one stroke.

Sorenstam, who started the day six strokes back fired a seven-under-par 65, but Webb posted a two-under 70 to claim the win with a 15-under total of 273.

Webb earned $165,000 for her fourth title of the season.

"I just really appreciate that the double-bogey was my only blemish out there, that I really got a hold of myself and didn't make any mistakes and just made a couple of birdies and that was good enough," Webb said.

"It could have gone either way. I'm sure Annika probably had more chances to make some putts as well.

The Hall of Famer from Australia moved past Sorenstam, Cristie Kerr and Mexico's Lorena Ochoa, who all have three wins in 2006.

Webb, who started the day with a five-shot lead, had four birdies and a double-bogey.

Webb closed with five straight pars but by the time she reached 18 she knew that was all she needed.

Playing in the group in front of Webb, Sorenstam's approach on the finishing hole was long and she was unable to chip in for a birdie, coming in at 14-under 274.

"I let everybody back in when I doubled seven. So from there, it was game on," Webb said.

Filipino-American Dorothy Delasin tallied for a 75 and would up at 287, good for $8,892. *AFP*

Tigers gore Royals, gain AL Central playoff slot

NEW YORK—THE DETROIT TIGERS scored nine runs in the second inning to clinch a playoff spot with an 11-4 win over the Kansas City Royals on Sunday.

The Tigers' second huge inning in successive games took away any drama from them clinching their first post-season berth since 1987. They also maintained a 1 ½ game lead on the Minnesota Twins in the AL Central race.

The Twins stayed close by downing the Baltimore Orioles 8-5 in Baltimore while the Oakland Athletics once again failed to clinch the AL West title in front of their home fans, dropping a 7-1 decision to the Los Angeles Angels.

Craig Monroe hit a three-home homer to highlight the second inning onslaught as the Tigers fought off a late-season slump to secure at least the AL wild card as the season enters its final week.

It also capped a remarkable turnaround for the franchise, which lost an AL record 119 games just three seasons ago. Detroit has the best record in the majors at 94-62.

Brandon Inge homered during the nine-run second inning for the Tigers, while Matt Stairs later added another solo shot to key Detroit's 11-hit attack. Monroe had three of those hits and Stairs and Ivan Rodriguez added a pair each.

The big lead made for an easy afternoon for Tigers starter Justin Verlander, who went five innings to pick up the win before Leyland gave his bullpen some work.

Verlander (17-9) allowed two runs on six hits with three strikeouts and two walks for the Tigers, who enjoyed a 10-run first innings in their last game.

Kansas City starter Runelvys Hernandez did not survive the second inning and took the loss, as the Royals were swept in the three-game series and moved closer to losing 100 games once again.

Hernandez (6-10) was charged with eight runs—just one earned—on seven hits with two walks and one strikeout. David de Jesus had three hits and drove in a pair of runs for the Royals. In Baltimore, Joe Mauer and Phil Nevin both hit two-run homers as the Twins moved closer to a post-season berth with their win over the Orioles.

The Twins still trail the Tigers by 1 ½ games in the AL Central, but their magic number to clinch the wild card is down to two over the Chicago White Sox, who kept their faint hopes alive with a 12-7 win over Seattle. *Reuters*

MJC shows social commitment

THE MANILA JOCKEY CLUB (MJC), Southeast Asia's oldest horseracing club, took timeout from racing to hold medical, surgical and dental missions through its charity arm, MJC Charities, last Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite. The annual mission benefited about 2,000 indigent families from the Carmona barangays near the SLLP: Milagrosa, Mabuhay, Baybay and Bangkal. The one-day mission began at 8 a.m. at the ground floor of the SLLP Turf Club. The University of Perpetual Help System donated the services of 50 of its doctors, nurses and other medical personnel, while 40 or so dentists from the Biñan Dental Association assisted the group. Medicines were donated by Pagcor, Lloyd Laboratories and Unilab, while Nestlé provided product samples for distribution. MJC, which celebrates its 140th anniversary in 2007, takes seriously its role of corporate responsibility. Its MJC Charities department is the backbone of a social programs. For inquiries, call 914-4852.

DOCTORS from UPHS and 50 dentists from Biñan offer free services during the MJC mission.

RACING TIPS
BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—EJ'S Forever/EJ'S Magic (4), Marigold /Bachelor Of Arts (6), Coeur D'Honneur (2), Pert And Prettty (3)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Nitty Gritty (7), Carbon Copy (1), Xangie's Halo (3), Don King (4)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Friendly Fire (8), Pabilic Express (7), Refreshing (5), Security Star (4)
Race 4—Iverson (9), Tribeca (2), Sakura Ijhay (6), Miss Vicky (4), Interceptor (3)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Sambat (7), Sound of Silence (6), Sutter's Quest (1), GI Speedball (3)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Red Phoenix (7), She Boom (8), Madel Ine (2), Reign of Fire (4), Astimegoesby (3)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Tiedil Forever (1), Quick Pick (2), Noble Principality (3), Vinfa's Pride (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Overture (8), Strong Boy (5), Divine Diva (3), Open Sky (4), Rachada (9), Princess Ther Ther (7)

Nadera, Mendoza rule NCFP President's rapid chess tilt

INTERNATIONAL MASTER BARLO NADERA AND woman International Master Beverly Mendoza topped their respective divisions in the National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Prospero Pichay Jr. mixed master rapid chess tournament late Sunday at the Syncopado Music Bar and Restaurant in Mabini, Manila.

The 40-year-old Nadera beat erstwhile co-leader IM Richard Bitoon after 50 moves of a Nimzo Indian Defense to finish with a 6-1 win-loss-record en route to the title and the P10,000 top prize.

Nadera suffered his only loss to Rhobel Legaspi in the second round of the seven-round Swiss system event.

IM Oliver Dimakiling and whiz kid IM-elect Wesley So tied for second with 5.5 points. They got P6,000 each.

Dimakiling nipped fellow IM Yves Rañola in 50 moves of a Modern Defense while the 12-year-old So bested NM Mirabeau Maga in 30 moves of a Scandinavian Game.

WIM Beverly Mendoza edged WNM Enerose Magno via the "winner over the other" tie-breaker to rule women's play. Both finished with 3.5 and got P5,000 each. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Briton sweeps five races

Sy 2nd thrice as AF3 wings back to Batangas

BOGOR, INDONESIA—BRITON JAMES Winslow of JA Motorsport remained invincible on the track, bucking several delays to cruise to victory in Round 14 and complete a sweep of the five races over the weekend at the Sentul International Circuit here.

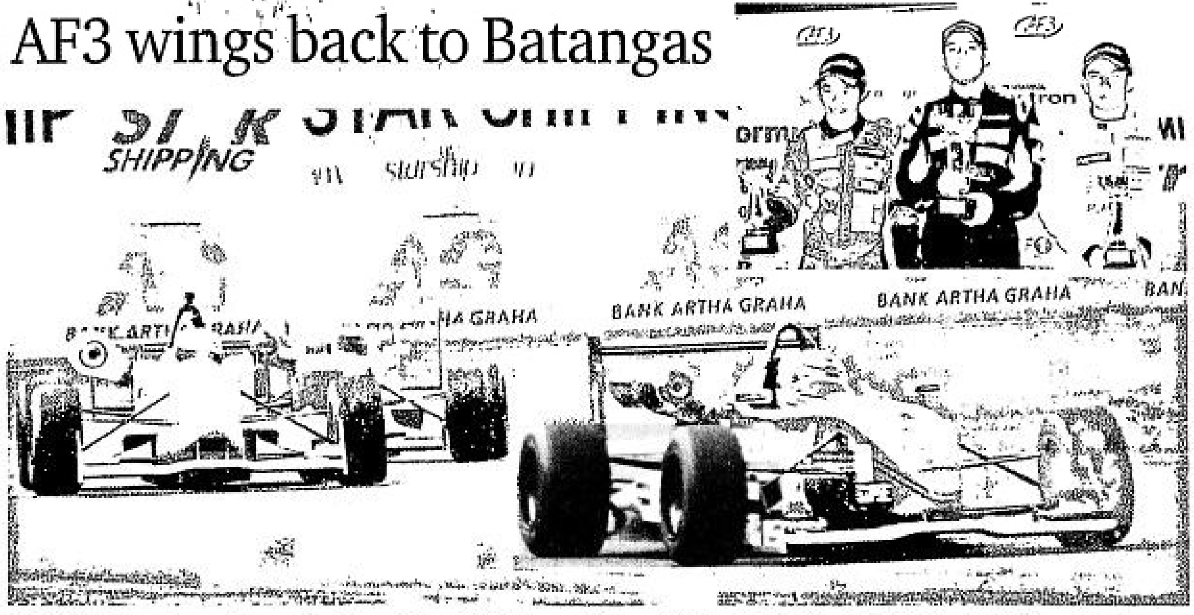
Speedtech Asia lead driver Tyson Sy placed second for the third straight time while erstwhile points classification leader Ali Jackson of Ireland's Aran Racing claimed the last podium spot.

Dado Peña, who had wrecked his Dallara '04 in qualifying on Thursday and was hoping to get back on the track Saturday for the final race, remained in the sidelines after his crew failed to finish repairs on his transmission and engine.

Six races had been scheduled in the five-day race week, but one had to be moved as a result of a crash on Saturday morning involving top Indon bet Moreno Soeprapto.

The race was restarted in the afternoon but was stopped after just three laps due to a minor incident involving Finland's Henri Karjalainen of Team Goddard and Bagoes Hermanto of R&W Indonesia. When it was restarted anew, Winslow again got off to a good start and pulled away from the field.

The Briton clocked 13 minutes and four tenths of a second, Sy clocked 13:03.945 while Jackson timed 13:08.310.



JAMES Winslow shows the way for Tyson Sy and Ali Jackson in Round 14. Inset, Winslow is flanked by Sy (left) and Jackson.

With Soeprapto watching from the sidelines, series newcomer Rama Danindro of Shell Helix Kinetic took the cudgels for the Indons, clocking a fourth-best 13:13.884.

Briton Dillon Battistini of JA Motorsport was fifth in 13:16.316, followed by Satrio Hermanto of R&W Indonesia (13:22.291), Speedtech Asia's Gaby de la Merced (13:41.278) and Michele Bumgarner of Team Goddard (14:02.440).

"I had a good start everytime," said Winslow. "The car was working so well I really didn't have to push that hard."

The 25-year-old Briton, a driving instructor at the Silverstone Circuit in Britain, jacked up his score to 207 and will go into the final leg in Batangas on Nov. 4-5 with a 26-point lead over Jackson (181). The 18-year-old Sy is the best-placed Filipino in third with 172.

"I'm amazed to have come up with five wins," said Winslow.

Sy was satisfied with his performance aboard his 2001 car but is still hoping his crew can finally diagnose what's wrong with his '04 Dallara that he drove to a sweep of the first three races in Batangas last May.

"I really didn't have a good start, and after that, I was just pushing to catch James," he said. "I was a little bit faster than him on some corners but it was very hard to pass him. After that, I had to maintain my position against Ali because his car was faster than mine."

Hermanto and Karjalainen nearly came to blows after their cars touched, knocking both of them out of the race.

Champs League 'Sweet 16' final cast up today

THE THREE WILD-CARD ENTRIES THAT WILL complete the "Sweet 16" of this year's Collegiate Champion's League will be known today as basketball reporters, columnists and sports editors of national papers rank the land's leading varsity teams in a lunch hosted by Solar Sports at the National Sports Grill.

It will be the first time in the history of college basketball that teams will be ranked by media.

Among the candidates for the wild-card spots are the University of the Philippines and National University, Jose Rizal University and San Sebastian, STI Colleges and Philippine Maritime Institute and Manuel L. Quezon University.

Already seeded in the Sweet 16 are UAAP teams Ateneo, University of Santo Tomas, University of the East and Adamson, NCAA teams San Beda College, Philippine Christian University, Letran and Mapua, Naascu champion Amacu, Ucaa champion Emilio Aguinaldo College and NCRAA champion St. Francis of Assisi.

There will be also two seeded teams from the Visayas-Mindanao region. The teams competing for the two slots are the top four teams of CESAFI—University of Visayas, University of Cebu, University of San Carlos and San Jose Recoletos—NOPSEA titlist West Negros Colleges and the champion of the DAA-Davao competition.

Lyceum, World Citi spikers zero in on WNCAA crowns

LYCEUM AND WORLD CITY COLLEGES MOVED within a victory shy of the WNCAA 37th season senior volleyball crowns by taking Game 1 of their separate best-of-three finals Sunday at the RTU gym. WCC dropped the first set but turned on the heat in the next three to beat St. Scholastica, 23-25, 28-26, 25-23, 25-17, in the Senior B finals. On the other hand, defending champion Lyceum got Rizal Technological University's number, scoring a 25-16, 25-14, 25-18 Senior A victory. The Lyceum Lady Pirates and WCC Vikings can wrap up the series with a second win this Saturday. In the battles for third place, San Beda-Alabang won over UA&P, 25-22, 25-19, 25-22, in Senior B while St. Francis of Assisi prevailed in Senior A over AMA Computer University, 25-17, 25-18, 25-13.

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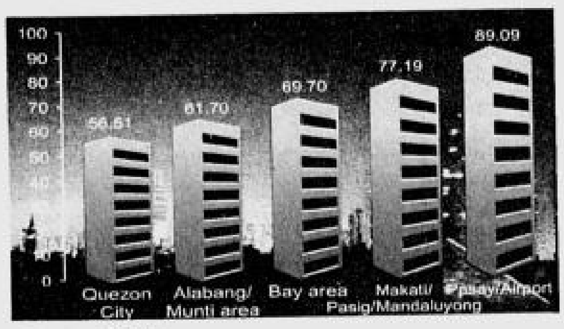
6-month, 1-yr T-bill rates continue to slide

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Pasay/Airport area posts highest hotel occupancy (January-June 2006, in percent)

Despite the 5.26-percent drop in occupancy, hotels in the Pasay/Airport area still managed to post the highest hotel occupancy rate among hotels in Metro Manila for the first semester of the year.



Source: Department of Tourism
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

Banks remain awash with cash

By Michelle V. Remo

EXCESS LIQUIDITY IN THE BANKING SYSTEM FORCED A DROP in the rates of the six-month and one-year treasury bills at yesterday's auctions, but the yield of the benchmark 91-day paper hardly moved as investors flocked to the longer-term debt instruments.

The 91-day treasury bill rate inched up by a basis point to 5.449 percent on bids totaling P3.68 billion.

The amount of tenders reflected an oversubscription as the government's debt offering stood at only P2 billion for each tenor. The oversubscription for the three-month government securities, however, still paled compared with the appetite manifested by investors for the 182- and 364-day bills.

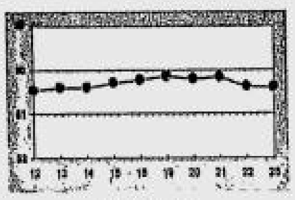
The 182-day securities fetched 5.851 percent, declining by 8.2 basis points from the last auction two weeks ago. Tenders for the six-month bills stood at P8.77 billion, reflecting an oversubscription of more than three times.

The rate for the 364-day bills hit 6.791 percent or 11.2 basis points lower than two weeks ago. Bids for the one-year debt instru-

6-MONTH/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



SEPTEMBER

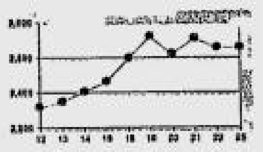
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 50.365 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Sept. 25, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX
SEPTEMBER



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Stock prices steady

SHARE PRICES HARDLY MOVED YESTERday in the absence of a fresh lead and after volatile trade last week, dealers said.

They said the market was consolidating and could soon test the key 2,600-point re-

STOCKS/ B2

More RP companies getting involved in CSR

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY PLAYS A crucial role in the fight against poverty worldwide, especially through their involvement in various social issues, according to the World Bank.

Speaking during the 5th Asian Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility, World Bank Group president Paul Wolfowitz said the contribution of the business sector to the global antipoverty drive already outstrips that of governments significantly.

"Today, for every dollar in fiscal development assistance, there is another four dollars in private sector flows to developing countries," he said in a videotaped statement aired during the event. "That means more than $300 billion per year in debt and equity go to developing countries."

Wolfowitz added that 90 percent of all jobs worldwide are generated through private sector initiative.

"That makes private sector jobs the most promising path out of poverty," he added.

In a separate press briefing, event chair Ramon R. del Rosario noted the rising awareness about CSR on the local corporate scene, even as firms are increasingly affected by "donor fatigue."

"Business has a wider responsibility to society," he said. "It's not just about making money."

Del Rosario, who also heads the Phinma business group, said that more and more companies were coming to realize that financial success was closely tied to how much they care for the communities in which they operate and the larger society.

MORE/ B2

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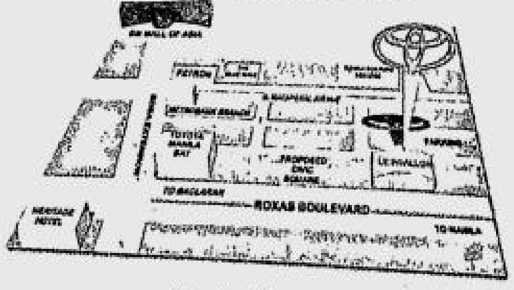

See posters and print ads for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit Number 3388 Series of 2006

Coca-Cola pursues talks to gain control of RP unit

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COCA-COLA CO., THE WORLD'S biggest soft drinks maker, is keen on beefing up its stake in Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. to at least 52 percent from its present 35 percent by buying additional shares from its joint-venture partner, food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

"Coke will always be in the Philippines. There is no thought of leaving the Philippines. There has been no change in our position to take management control and a majority stake," Jose Baylon, vice president for public affairs at the local division of The Coca-Cola Export Corp., said at the sidelines of yesterday's Asian CSR Forum at the Holiday Inn Galleria.

San Miguel owns 65 percent of CCBPI.

Officials of The Coca-Cola Co. in Atlanta said in an e-mail reply to the INQUIRER that discussions were ongoing with San Miguel on the future of CCBPI, including the option of the US-based parent firm to take a majority stake in and management and operational control of the local bottler.

"However, as these discussions have not been fully finalized, we are not ready to comment further," TCCC said.

The Coca-Cola Co. and San Miguel bought the Philippine bottler from Coca-Cola Amatil in 2001 for $2.26 billion.

CCBPI, which includes Cosmos Bottling Corp. and Philippine Beverage Partners, accounts for 15 percent of San Miguel's total revenues. In terms of operating income, CCBPI contributes 5 percent to San Miguel's.

6-month, 1-yr T-bill rates . . .

From page B1

ments reached P9.77 billion, an oversubscription of nearly four times. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted P6 billion worth of bids, raising in full its borrowing program yesterday.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters that the market's interest was for government securities with longer maturities, given that the rate for the 91-day bills was seen as too low.

Cruz said there was hardly any trading in the secondary market for the three-month bills and that investors of these debt instruments were just waiting for the paper to mature.

Cruz said the results of the auctions for locally issued government securities, particularly for the 182- and 364-day bills, reflected positive market sentiment for the country's externally issued debt instruments.

During the recently concluded meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank member-countries in Singapore, Cruz said there were quite a number of foreign investors who expressed interest to trade Philippine-issued bonds.

Only 3 percent of holders of externally issued Philippine bonds are foreigners and the rest are local investors. Cruz expressed optimism that the number of foreign holders of Philippine bonds would increase given the country's improving economy and the national government's fiscal position.

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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

BOTH EXECUTIVES AND RANK-AND-FILE employees of power plant operator Mirant Philippines seem to be positioning for a little killing.

Word goes around that the company just received a letter, suggesting in no uncertain terms that the company should give employees their "separation pay."

And the letter purportedly comes from ...well, the very same employees. Wow!

As everybody knows, the parent company of Mirant Philippines, the one called Mirant Asia-Pacific Ltd., is up for sale to the highest bidder.

Proceeds from the sale will then cover, partly, the funding for the tender offer of the US-listed grandparent firm Mirant Corp., which is just recovering from bankruptcy.

My info is that the US-based Mirant already has a short list of the bidders. Thus, ownership of the foreign-based parent firm Mirant Asia-Pacific will soon change hands.

To the employees of Mirant Philippines, it's clear that with the forthcoming change in the ownership of Mirant Asia-Pacific, which will take place thousands of miles away across the seas, and which therefore will have little (if at all) effect on the local company, they are entitled to separation pay.

It's like the contractors of the government getting paid for something that does not exist—you know, the "ghost projects."

Simply, what the employees want is the separation pay even without their being separated from the company.

Quick, somebody please tell those guys that the overseas transaction, the sale of Mirant Asia-Pacific, will have little impact on local operations, except perhaps for a few top management people.

In a lock-stock-and-barrel sale like that, the whole organization usually remains the same. The buyer simply becomes the new stockholder. The obligations of the company will remain. Everything will remain the same, even the cockroaches in the offices.

Put another way, the local power companies are not going to close down. The workers will not be ...well, "separated."

Now, I heard that Mirant Philippines, in a surprising coincidence, a few months ago got the same weird request from a few top executives for separation pay. Hmm.

Can it be then that the "employees" are the same top executives who want to cash in on the company's fat separation package without the actual separation?

Apparently, those top guys are the ones agitating the rank and file to make their move for a little killing to look like it enjoys mob support, much like "people power."

After all, some top guys in the state firm Napocor already employed a similar modus operandi, as they raided the company's billion-peso retirement fund.

Subsequently they simply had themselves "rehired," so that now they continue to make money out of multimillion-peso kickbacks.

Anyway, if Mirant Philippines is not a government company, why would its people want to get money that, technically, is not due them? Not for lack of greed, I guess!

Maybe the employees were concerned about what will happen to them, since the management has already told them that nothing will happen to the rank and file. Naturally, the new stockholders of Mirant Asia-Pacific will want to put their own trusted people in top management of the subsidiary Mirant Philippines.

That's the only time they can get the separation pay. That's why it is called "separation" pay.

Still, I heard that Mirant Philippines has a generous "separation package," apparently equivalent to more than 20 times the legal formula.

Maybe it explains why some people are agitating for separation pay.

I heard that the campaign is even turning dirty, since a "white paper" is now making the rounds of business, discussing the taste of higher-ups in the company for expensive clothes and watches.

Pressure tactics like that immediately tell me that some guys are really out to make a killing. One of them is reported to be getting something like P20 million if Mirant Philippines is so stupid that it caves in to the campaign.

***

The new owner of the high-end membership store chain Price Smart, the one patterned after Price Club and Costco in the United States, is also the group that owns another store chain called Pure Gold.

The main figure behind Pure Gold of course is Lucio Co, who in the early 1990s started the retail chain as duty-free stores in the former US bases Subic and Clark.

In acquiring Price Smart, however, Pure Gold must be trying to ride on its phenomenal success in Metro Manila, where it opened at least 10 huge stores in the past few years, catering mostly to the middle market, choosing to carry "imported" but still affordable items.

Now why did William Go, who owns Price Smart, choose to sell to Pure Gold?

Actually, first to go to the negotiating table with William Go was the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy. The deal between William Go and the Sy family nevertheless fell through.

It's just that Lucio Co beat the SM group to the deal because he gave William Go the much better offer. I heard that it was all a matter of "pricing."

As for the existing members of Price Smart, which seemed to have run out of good merchandise, Pure Gold can surely bring in a wider selection of imported goods. Lucio Co certainly has established a track record in Pure Gold.

More RP companies getting. . .

From page B1

"The most successful companies are those which fully incorporate CSR in their business models, and not just as peripherals," he said, adding that this was borne out by local experience where the largest business conglomerates all have successful advocacies targeted at the housing, education and social services sectors.

During yesterday's press briefing, business leaders also noted that local firms have started to shift their philosophies from engaging in CSR activities just to comply with social norms, but have begun to actually buy into the concept more wholeheartedly.

"It makes good business sense for them to do so," said Asian Institute of Management chair Felipe Alfonso. He added that, contrary to popular perception, CSR is not only for large companies with money to spare but is also open to small firms which can spare other forms or resources like technical expertise and employee manhours to helping target communities.

Alfonso pointed to the case of local coffee chain Figaro, which actively helps farmers in Cavite produce better coffee beans through technical support and livelihood assistance projects.

"What happens is that they help the community, and in the process, also help ensure a steady supply [of coffee] for their operations," he said

In addition, more firms have come to realize that they also need a "social license" from the communities where they are located on top of a legal license from government regulators if they are to run a successful operation, as in the case of the mining industry.

According to organizers, this year's CSR forum is being attended by 530 delegates from all over the region.

"This is our largest ever gathering," Del Rosario said, noting that less than 300 delegates attended the first CSR summit when it was first launched.

"This is a good indication of how CSR has gained the acceptance and interests of companies," he added.

Stock prices steady

From page B1

sistance level.

The composite index inched up 0.03 points at 2,531.68, after moving between 2,527.16 and 2,542.84.

The broader all-share index fell 0.8 point to 1,540.19.

Gainers narrowly beat losers 37 to 33, with 69 unchanged.

Turnover was 2.45 billion shares valued at P1.29 billion.

"I think the market is building a base before testing resistance at the key 2,600-point level," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

He said window-dressing as the July-September quarter draws to a close would likely push the market higher this week, but he added that positive leads would be needed to fuel a rise in the main index above 2,600 points.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., or PLDT, the most actively traded stock, fell P5 to P2,220 after its New York-listed American Depositary Receipts retreated 59 US cents to $43.25 on Friday.

SM Investments gained P8 to P245, and Ayala Corp. rose P2.50 to P462.50.

San Miguel A-shares were steady at P65 and its B-shares also finished unchanged at P74.50.

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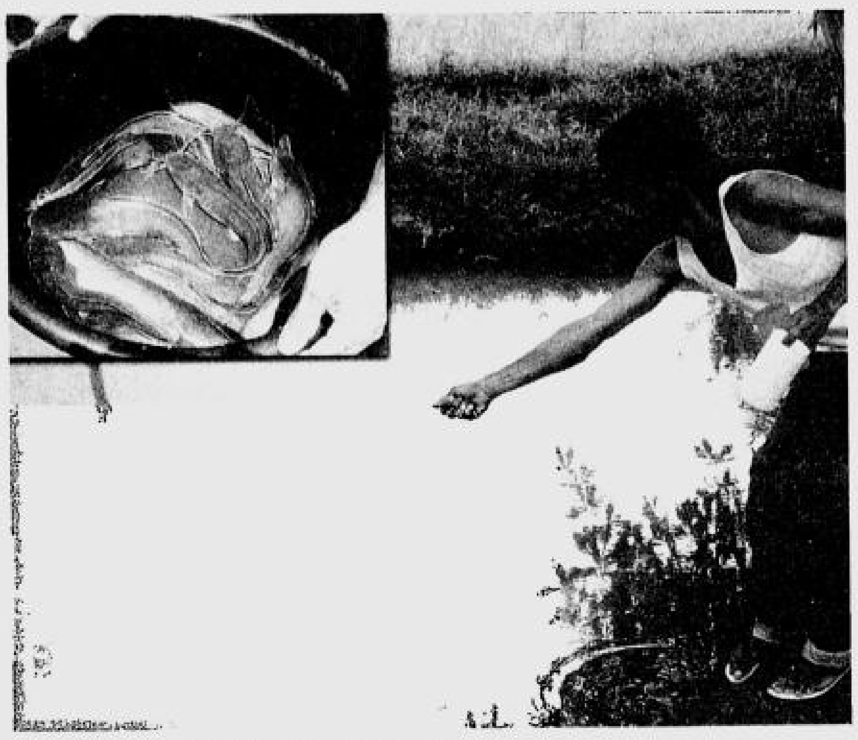

FROM COMBAT TO AQUACULTURE
Pamaloy Kamsa, a former member of the Moro National Liberation Front, tends to his fishpond stocked with hybrid tilapia (inset). Kamsa has learned modern aquaculture techniques under the Targeted Commodity Expansion Program, an initiative that trains former MNLF fighters to engage in the production of tilapia, lapu-lapu and prawns. TCEP is being implemented under the USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao program.

Coco export volume up 19% in 1st half

By Ronnel W. Domingo

OFFICIAL FIGURES FROM the Philippine Coconut Authority showed that coconut exports in the first half actually grew in volume by 19.3 percent, 6.1 percentage points higher than industry estimates.

Last month, the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines said estimates pegged first-half growth at 13.2 percent.

However, UCAP accounting covers only major products like coconut oil, copra meal, oleochemicals and desiccated coconut shipments, while that of the PCA includes coco shell charcoal, activated carbon, glycerine, fresh coconuts and other products.

Also, the PCA covers output of all producers nationwide, including non-UCAP members.

PCA data show that the total volume posted from January to June reached 1,122,677 metric tons in copra terms compared to 940,755 MT in the same period of 2005.

Coconut oil continued to be the top export, with shipments growing by 22.6 percent to 606,656 MT as of end-June, while copra meal cargoes grew by 20.4 percent to 243,563 MT.

Exports of desiccated or dehydrated coconut grew by 3.8 percent to 65,365 MT in copra equivalent, but outbound cargoes of oleochemicals and activated carbon barely grew at 0.76 percent to 58,672 MT, and 0.62 percent to 17,677 MT, respectively.

On the other hand, cargoes of products like coconut shell charcoal dipped by 20.8 percent to 11,859 MT; glycerine by 12.7 percent to 7,289 MT, and fresh coconuts by 36.4 percent to 1,112 MT.

Total shipments of other coconut-based products like vinegar, water and chips grew by 5.6 percent to 13,007 MT. The PCA was not able to provide a breakdown for these products.

The PCA said June shipments dropped in volume by 16.6 percent to 113,818 MT and earnings slid as well by 18.3 percent to $55.9 million.

Coconut oil shipments in June were slashed by 23.1 percent to 56,530 MT and copra meal by 31.5 percent to 34,178 MT.

Exports of desiccated coconut rose 17.3 percent to 12,474 MT, and of oleochemicals by 47 percent to 4,802 MT in copra terms.

In June, the bulk of shipments of coconut oil and desiccated coconut went to the United States; copra meal to South Korea, and coco shells to Japan.

Population growth seen to offset rising income

Expert adds income not equally distributed

By Christine A Gaylican

THE EXPECTED GROWTH in per capita income will hardly be felt in a country with a ballooning population, according to an economist from the University of the Philippines.

The country's population growth rate has hardly changed in recent years, said economist Arsenio M. Balisacan. It is estimated to be at a high level of 2.3 percent a year.

Meanwhile, other Asian countries, including Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, are registering substantial declines in birth rate.

The continuing rise in the country's population will "eat up Philippine per capita income over the years," Balisacan said.

Balisacan said that the last official census was taken six years ago.

Balisacan and other economists pointed out that the government experts who had painted a rosy picture of the country's economic landscape had little basis to anticipate growth in per capita income.

Balisacan said the government officials based their assumptions on the peso's appreciation and growth in the country's gross domestic product.

"There is not enough growth in our per capita income and this has not been equally distributed," he said.

Balisacan, who is also the executive director of Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca), said that the low income level happens to reflect low levels of productivity.

"Aggravating the situation is the rapid growth of population, which requires more food supplies and more jobs with decent incomes," he said.

Also, Balisacan said, the country is still far from attaining food security.

Compared to other Asian countries, the Philippines' agricultural productivity is much lower.

He said that poverty is far more extensive here.

The majority of the poor are engaged in agriculture.

Despite its declining contribution to the country's national income, the agriculture sector accounts for more than one-third of the total labor force—rising to nearly one-half if agri-based manufacturing and service sectors are included, according to study undertaken by Searca.

GFIs urged to put up ₱5B for agri ventures

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL institutions are being urged to put up a P5-billion fund to finance joint venture partnerships with the private sector on agribusiness projects.

According to this corporate farming strategy, the government will have to put up a "capital fund" which big businesses can tap to encourage them to go into agribusiness and open up job opportunities for small farmers in the countryside.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. is urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to set aside P5 billion a year and course the fund through the Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines.

"We have been pushing our businessmen to go into the information and communication technology sector, why not push them to go into agribusiness?" asked Magsaysay. "The capital fund can be a first step to enticing [the businessmen]."

He said the money could be allocated by the government as equity for possible joint venture with big business entities such as the San Miguel Corp. and the Gokongwei Group's JG Summit Holdings.

He said the private sector should increase its involvementy in agribusiness if the Philippines hopes to sustain food production. *Christine A. Gaylican*

With repeal of EO 138, execs fear losing gains

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES Institute of the Philippines has urged Malacañang to restore Executive Order No. 138, warning that its repeal would lead to financial bleeding, and take the country further away from its goal of reducing poverty.

EO 138, issued during the Estrada administration, weeded out inefficiently managed government-funded credit programs that wasted scarce resources. It also fostered the greater role of the private sector in providing financial services to the needy and the adoption of market-oriented interest rates on loans and deposits.

In Executive Order No. 558 dated Aug. 8, President Macapagal-Arroyo repealed EO 138 entitled "Directing Government Entities Involved in the Implementation of Credit Programs to Adopt the Credit Policy Guidelines Formulated by the National Credit Council."

In a position paper dated Sept. 20, the 700-member organization said history had shown that the objective of EO 558—to enable government agencies to supply credit in poor areas not reached by financial institutions—was not effective in combating poverty.

"The government cannot afford to undertake a microlending program with such a huge demand, given its limited funding and poor track record in microfinance," the FINEX position paper said.

The group said EO 138 was the product of "hard lessons" learned by many past administrations.

"The main lesson learned which formed the impetus to establishing EO 138 was that direct lending by government non-financial agencies to the agricultural and microenterprise sectors is costly in the form of huge fiscal costs from subsidized interest rates," FINEX said.

"In addition to this, there were poor repayment rates given the beneficiaries' dole-out mentality, high administrative costs, unsatisfactory outreach and a distortive impact on financial markets caused by subsidized interest rates."

FINEX said EO 138 provided a policy environment which was conducive to private sector participation through the adoption of market-oriented financial policies.

"As a result, more and more private financial institutions extended credit to micro-entrepreneurs in a sustainable environment that now claims the participation of 193 private financial institutions, with a portfolio of P3.3 billion and an outreach of 600,000 beneficiaries," the group added.

The old EO promoted savings mobilization among government financial institutions and state entities were also dissuaded from providing credit services directly or indirectly to various sectors.

Even the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has expressed concern that, as a result of the repeal of EO 138, the government could lose the hard won gains in recent months "that has dramatically improved international perception of the Philippines."

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Central banks will soon stop selling gold

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I KNEW ABOUT THE COUP IN THAILAND before anyone else. I received a message from the CIA saying Thaksin, Thaksout.

I spent a relaxing weekend watching the Ryder Cup, which takes place every two years between the United States and Europe. Both sides pick their 12 best golfers and it was very exciting. On the first two days, they play foursomes, two against two, and Europe won 10-6. This shows that Europeans are much better at foreplay. The golf carts are really luxurious. The interior is made of leather and they even have tees to rest your balls on.

The Philippines appears high on the list of countries with a high level of corruption so Kraft is producing a new cheese for the local market called Kraft and Corruption.

You may recall that on Valentine's Day, our 10th wedding anniversary, I wanted to take my wife to the Greasy Spoon but it was closed due to typhoid. Since then, the manager has died of food poisoning but the chef took over and maintains the same low standard. All the forks and spoons are chained to the wall, the chairs and tables are bolted to the floor and the plates are made of metal so you cannot smuggle them past the metal detector. But it is remarkably good value at P25, all you can eat. In case you think I am making this up, look it up on Google and you will see numerous references to Greasy Spoon. There are restaurants in the US and the UK and I would like to start a franchise here. I am looking for entrepreneurs with capital. I already have a backdoor listing for it.

I am afraid that I am getting old. I just had a triple bypass, a hip replacement, new knees and diabetes. I'm half-blind, stone deaf and I take 40 medications that make me dizzy, out of breath and subject to blackouts. I have bouts of dementia, can't feel my hands and feet and due to Alzheimer's, I have lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's license.

***

Last Thursday, I wrote a special article, which was in fact, a scoop. This week, Crew Gold will post on its website an 18-page report by ABG Collier on Apex, which corroborates everything I wrote. This Norwegian company has obviously had its detailed research report vetted and approved by Norwegian President Jan Vestrum, otherwise it would not be appearing on Crew Gold's website. I was very careful not to buy any shares ahead of the write up.

I never recommend any stock without first doing my homework and that is probably why every recommendation, going back six years, has tripled or quadrupled at some stage. The odd man out is TEL, up 10 times on my recommended price of P226.

Before I wrote up Fil Hispano as "the hottest stock in town," I spent 2 days with its directors going around their offices in the Citibank building learning about the potential of call centers as my knowledge of the subject was very sketchy. There is still plenty of growth left, despite increasing competition, and I have not suggested selling Paxys.

Similarly, I calculated the profit of PX from its shipments of copper and gold, published on the PSE website, usually in the middle of the month except when they have two shipments. As they sell forward three months, I could calculate the profits almost exactly and I knew that at P1.64, the shares were selling on a P/E of 2 so I told subscribers to get in. I also met with two directors, who confirmed that my calculations were correct.

I have no wish to be regarded as a tipster and as my recommendations cause such an impact on the market, henceforth, I will confine my stock picks to the newsletter, which I keep down to a small number deliberately. I will continue to write about global markets and try to widen my base by including items of interest such as the one below.

The following article is a summary of a report, which appears on resource investor.com and was sent to me by a friend.

The European Central Bank reported on Sept. 20 that three central banks had decreased their gold holdings by $633 million in the week ending Sept. 15. At today's price, this equals 33 tons and puts September sales at 40 tons so far. The editor of the Grandich newsletter wrote, "It's becoming clear that my suspicion that central bank selling is indeed a major factor behind the recent gold decline."

The 15 central banks have now reportedly sold about 380 tons, still substantially short of the 500 tons permitted by the agreement. This is not the largest sale this year; there were about 57 tons of gold sold in the week ending May 5, making 62 for the month. The average gold price in May was $676 an ounce, hitting $730 on May 12.

Excluding September, gold sales for 2006 averaged at about 5 tons a week. This month's sales of 40 tons have already surpassed the monthly average of 33 tons. The Bundesbank has not exercised its option to sell 120 tons this year.

Grandich expects the weakness to continue to the end of the month, possibly to as low as $540. Thereafter, the editor expects gold prices to get back above its key resistance of $640. He expects stocks to fall soon and that should provide the catalyst for a major rally in gold and silver.

Why does he expect gold to hit bottom this month? Well, here is the good news. Under the terms of the agreement, which extends to 2009, the banks must complete their selling by Sept. 27. After that, they cannot sell any more gold until 2007.

Over the past five years, world gold production averaged at 82 million ounces a year, equal to about 2,500 tons. So the selling of 380 tons by the central banks is a formidable percentage. With the rest of the year free of their selling, I think that after this week, gold will recover.

Our market spent the week trading sideways, uncertain whether to advance to 2600 or consolidate around the current level. Foreign buying has been extremely high last week but stopped today so turnover fell back to the P1-billion mark, having reached P4 billion last week.

Plans for the Manila stock exchange to thai up with Bangkok have been abandoned.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Pure Foods sees higher sales in '06

SAN MIGUEL PURE FOODS CO. INC. EXpects to book P2 billion in additional sales this year from new products, company president Francisco Alejo III said after the company's special stockholder's meeting yesterday.

Alejo said additional sales would come from new coffee products such as a new brewed coffee line, condiments, milk and ice cream.

Amidst intense competitive pressure and a generally frail economic environment, San Miguel Pure Foods registered P24.9 million in consolidated revenue in the first half of 2006, 3 percent higher than year-ago level.

Better margins brought about by cuts in direct material costs and improved efficiencies resulted in a 12-percent rise in gross profit against year-ago level. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Philweb stake in ISM up to 40%

PHILWEB CORP., A TECHNOLOGY FIRM controlled by businessman Roberto Ongpin, has brought back its stake in ISM Communications Corp. (ISM) to 40 percent by buying back shares from a subsidiary of Hong Kong-listed Softbank Investment International (Strategic) Ltd. (SIIS).

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PhilWeb said it had signed an agreement with SIIS for PhilWeb to purchase about 2.3 billion shares of ISM for $1.43 million, or P71.7 million at P50 to $1.

The amount due will be interest-free, to be paid in quarterly installments of $358,613.25.

The share acquisition raised PhilWeb's ownership of ISM back to 40 percent. In July 2004, PhilWeb trimmed its 40-percent stake in ISM to 32.4 percent by selling 7.6 percent of its holdings to SIIS Investment Holdings Ltd., a subsidiary of SIIS, for P80 million.

Riza T. Olchondra

IC to impose networth requirement

Stricter rules seen boosting public confidence in insurance industry

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION WILL SOON start imposing minimum networth requirements on insurance companies to help ensure the stability of the industry.

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said the measure was contained in a Department of Finance order which also raised the capitalization requirement on insurance companies.

Escobillo said this was expected to regain and boost public confidence in the insurance sector.

The industry's credibility has been tainted by the liquidity problems encountered by certain pre-need insurance companies.

Under the measure, life and nonlife insurance firms that are wholly owned by Filipinos will be required to have a minimum networth of P100 million starting Dec. 31, 2006, to be increased by P50 million per year until it reaches P350 million by Dec. 31, 2010. It will have to be raised further to P500 million by Dec. 31, 2011.

Those with foreign equity of 40 percent or less will be required to have a minimum networth of P200 million by Dec. 31, 2006, to be increased by P100 million yearly until it reaches P600 million by Dec. 31, 2010.

Insurance companies with foreign equity of more than 40 percent but less than 60 percent will be required to have a minimum networth of P300 million by Dec. 31, 2006, to be increased by P100 million every year until it reaches P700 million by Dec. 31, 2010.

Firms with at least 60-percent foreign equity will be required to maintain a minimum networth of P500 million by Dec. 31, 2006, P600 million by 2007, P700 million by 2008, P850 million by 2009, and P1 billion by P2010.

Reinsurance firms will be required to have a minimum networth of P750 million by Dec. 31, 2006, to be increased by P250 million every year until it reaches P2 billion by 2010.

The required networth levels are contained in Department Order No. 27-06 issued by the DOF, the head agency of the IC. The order also requires insurance firms to increase their capitalization by a minimum of P25 million a year over the medium term.

The commission is bent on pushing through with the imposition of this requirement despite complaints raised by industry players, which said the measure might force small insurance firms to close down to the disadvantage of policy holders.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association (Plia) had said the stricter requirements would hurt rather than help improve the stability of the insurance sector. The group cautioned that a reduction in the number of industry players would in fact hinder the attainment of the government's goal of increasing the number of Filipinos covered by insurance from the current 12 percent of the population to 20 percent next year and 40 percent by 2010.

RLC offer price set at ₱12/share

ROBINSONS LAND CORP. HAS SET ITS offer price at P12 per share, which was estimated to raise P9.7 billion for the company and its selling shareholders.

The public offering involves 811.14 million shares, 450 million are new common shares and 361.1 million are secondary shares.

Trading of RLC shares was halted yesterday and would resume on Oct. 5, the listing date of its shares.

From the primary offering, alone, RLC estimated it could generate P5.23 billion, which could fund the bulk of its capital expenditure program next year.

UBS Investment Bank as the sole international underwriter while ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners Inc. is the domestic underwriter.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Logistics firm goes intermodal

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE COUNTRY'S INTERMODAL LOGISTICS system has yet to reach its maturity, but for producers, transporters and distributors, it has become the best way to go.

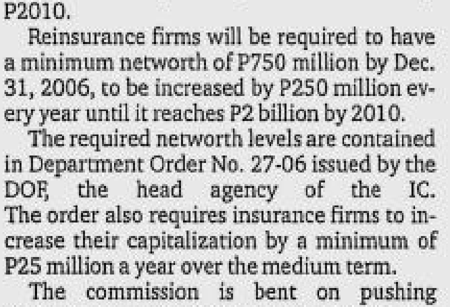
And it is no longer just a matter of ferrying goods from one place to another, 2GO president and CEO Sabin Aboitiz said in an interview. He said that a company involved in the logistics business must ensure that the time of delivery was shortened, security was tightened, and efficiency was improved to minimize wastage.

Current supply chain management (SCM) systems are typically linear and sequential, with decisions made centrally and changes typically take days and even months to complete. However, a study by 2GO found that customers wanted simplified logistic solutions that could be easily monitored so that management decisions could be made quickly.

In response, the company integrated its land, sea and air transport delivery system into a warehousing service. It also set up real-time monitoring of all components, complete with alerts whenever bottlenecks appear.

The system takes full advantage of the country's Roro system, which has trimmed the number of transport points from as many as 15 to only 3. In keeping with the times, 2GO pioneered a Road Roro Terminal System.

"The system of moving cargo via holding trucks that go on land and also at sea (through freighter vessels) reduces the amount of time spent on checking and (minimizes) the chances of pilferage because the cargo hold is opened only at the designated stop," Aboitiz said.



2GO integrated its land, sea and air transport delivery system for a more efficient service

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of September 25, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	38.5	39	38.5	39	842,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	58.5	58	58.5	1,264,400
China Banking Corp.	690	690	685	690	680
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.43	2,050,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	75	75	74.5	75	1,797,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	40.5	40.5	39.5	40	411,400
Philippine National Bank	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	3,200
Phil. Savings Bank	43	43	43	43	2,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	50	51.5	50	51	44,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	43.5	43.5	43	43.5	3,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citisecononline.Com Inc.	3.35	3.7	3.35	3.65	1,699,000
First Abacus Financial	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30	30.5	30	30.5	22,900
Manulife Financial Corp.	1590	1615	1590	1615	2,980
Ivantage Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	395,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.5	300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	49	49	49	49	175,100
Manila Electric Co. A	19	19	19	19	137,000
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	29.5	28.5	28.5	150,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.9	9.1	8.8	8.9	1,046,000
Petron Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.15	4,685,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.96	730,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	22.75	22.75	29,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	35.5	35.5	35	35	140,300
Pancake House Inc.	5	5	5	5	5,000
RFM Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.86	640,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	329,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	65	64.5	65	65,100
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74	74.5	54,900
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	18	18	2,292,100
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	99,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	261,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.3	6.5	5.3	6	15,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	3.95	4.15	3.8	4	1,326,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	50,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	300,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	40,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.49	0.56	0.49	0.56	186,250,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.16	2,200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	460	467.5	460	462.5	312,580
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	243,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	10,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.98	2	1.98	1.98	544,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	800,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	54,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.93	0.94	0.92	0.94	1,320,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.25	412,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	40,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	3,527,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.8	757,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.85	2,468,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	213,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.22	1.26	5,022,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,600,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.19	0.195	6,750,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.61	140,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	1,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	240	246	240	245	90,590
South China Resources Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	60,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.34	1.38	1.3	1.38	432,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.11	2,100,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.75	15	14.75	14.75	8,594,400
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,469,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.96	1	0.96	1	450,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	30,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	292,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	5,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.51	5,180,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.99	1	0.99	1	240,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	2,700,000
Filinvest Land Inc	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.48	10,592,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	2,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	20,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	770,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	40,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	1,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.88	1.9	1.86	1.88	16,758,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	451,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.25	0.25	230,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.41	8,010,000
SM Development Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.82	1.84	439,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.4	1,546,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	300,000
MEDIA					
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1	1	1	1	120,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.28	1,077,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1075	1080	1075	1080	6,610
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	3,317,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2225	2225	2220	2220	78,010
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.185	0.185	11,560,000
Imperial Res.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	13,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.04	2.04	1.98	1.98	446,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	200,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	102,000
Philweb Corp.	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	51,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.6	552,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	16.25	16.5	16.25	16.25	99,200
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.98	2	1.98	1.98	5,590,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	240,000
Philippine Racing Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	150,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	850,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	3,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.12	2	2.08	6,465,000
Paxys Inc.	10	10.25	10	10.25	2,615,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.7	6.7	6.2	6.3	4,761,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.6	6.6	6.2	6.4	2,487,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	291,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.4	782,000
Benguet Corp. A	10.75	11	10.75	11	46,100
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.26	0.28	0.25	0.25	51,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.3	0.32	0.29	0.3	15,780,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.026	0.024	0.024	926,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.03	0.028	0.028	391,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	190,000,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.75	3.75	4,859,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	20	20	18.75	18.75	485,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	520,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	200,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	1,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	63,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	339,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	1,542,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.6	9.6	80,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	104	104	104	104	25,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	509,700

DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. has disclosed the disposal of 500 shares by senior vice president Anabelle L. Chua for P2,260 per share on Sept. 19.

***

PHILWEB Corp. has purchased 2.286 billion shares of Softbank Investment International (Strategic) Limited in ISM Communications Corp. for $1.4 million. With this acquisition, PhilWeb's ownership in ISM will increase to 40 percent. ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

September 25, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.781555	1.000000	50.2650
Japan	Yen	0.006710	0.008585	0.4315
United Kingdom	Pound	1.485815	1.901100	95.5588
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100418	0.128485	6.4583
Switzerland	Franc	0.632633	0.809454	40.6872
Canada	Dollar	0.699816	0.895415	45.0080
Singapore	Dollar	0.493126	0.630955	31.7150
Australia	Dollar	0.586489	0.750413	37.7195
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.073201	2.652661	133.3360
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208403	0.266652	13.4033
Brunei	Dollar	0.491575	0.628970	31.6152
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000109	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020925	0.026774	1.3458
UAE	Dirham	0.212796	0.272272	13.6858
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.279500	64.3141
Argentina	Peso	0.252277	0.322789	16.2250
Brazil	REAL	0.353229	0.451957	22.7176
Denmark	Kroner	0.134021	0.171480	8.6194
India	Rupee	0.017075	0.021848	1.0982
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212726	0.272183	13.6813
Mexico	New Peso	0.070790	0.090576	4.5528
New Zealand	Dollar	0.515504	0.659587	33.1541
South Africa	Rand	0.103012	0.131804	6.6251
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001057	0.0531
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023730	0.030363	1.5262

BENGUET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Alapang, La Trinidad, Benguet
Tel. Nos. (074) 422-2000 / (074) 422-2110
Fax No. (074) 422-2848

INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the supply of various standard pole line hardware and other electrical equipments and materials.

The **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** will be held on **10 October 2006** at **10:00 a.m.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City. The complete list of electrical materials and equipments including the technical description and specifications and other related matters will be discussed.

Prospective bidders must submit their Company Profile: Income Tax Returns and Audited Financial Statements for the past three (3) years and Track Record.

Bid Documents are available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,000.

SEALED BIDS must be received on or before **16 October 2006** at **10:00 a.m.** at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City. **OPENING OF BIDS** will be on the same date, time and venue.

Only those who were present during the Pre-Qualification Conference and who submitted the above-enumerated requirements will be allowed during the Bidding Proper.

BENECO reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the BENECO.

PBPAC

(PDI - Sept. 26 & 29, 2006)

BUY * SELL * PAWN
WATCHES JEWELRY DIAMONDS
BEST OFFER IN TOWN
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HIS & HERS Watch Center
GoldCrest Bldg.
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JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, INC.
G/F Ever Gotesco Grand Central, Caloocan City will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of MARCH & APRIL 2006 on OCT. 17, 2006 at 11:00 am J. Lanuza - Auctioneer

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SANYO DENKI *PHILIPPINES, INC.*
urgently needs

PRODUCTION CONTROL MANAGER

Must have at least 5 years extensive work experience in Production Control Planning based on accepting order and engineering information (order and Drawing) Progress Production Planning, Adjustments of Production, Delivery Date, Inventory controls of finished products, Forwarding works such as Import and Export processing can perform IZUMI, JUMP and ASHICUDA software.

PRODUCTION ENGINEERING MANAGER

Must have at least 5 years of extensive knowledge in the Production Engineering, and Facilities Maintenance. We are expecting the applicants to have at least a working knowledge of an Industrial Robotics course. The work experience should be in the field of maintaining production machines / equipments, facilities including building maintenance. Applicant must be an expert on the machines / equipments related to production of Fan Motors Servo Motors and Uninterruptible device.

All applicants for the above positions should be able to speak, read and write Nihongo.

Interested applicants should send their resumé with 2x2 picture and other credentials to:

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT CENTER
Bldg. 225, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority
Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Marketing execs hold 14th Mepi awards

THE MARKETING EXECUtives of the Pharmaceutical-Healthcare Industry (Mepi) will hold its search for the 14th Mepi Excellence Awards on Sept. 26 at the AIM Conference Center Manila, Makati City. The search will have the following categories: sales representative of the year, district sales manager of the year and product manager of the year. The winners will be known during the awards night on Oct. 6 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City.

The search objectives are to give recognition to outstanding pharmaceutical sales and marketing practitioners, to encourage pharmaceutical sales and marketing to strive for excellence, and to highlight the continuing efforts of Mepi in developing the sales and marketing profession in the pharmaceutical industry.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Location/ Brief Description	**Supply and delivery of approximately 46,620 bottles of 5-gallon bottled purified water (no spill and non-reusable cap), including free use and maintenance of hot and cold non-spill type/nozzle type dispensers, for the BSP Main Complex and the Security Plant Complex personnel for a period of one (1) year, per BSP specifications**
Approved Budget for the Contract	**P2,331,000.00**
Contract Period	**One (1) year effective upon execution of the contract**

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years amounting to at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	26 September-5 October 2006 up to 2:00 PM only
2. Pre-bid Conference	6 October 2006, 3:00 PM
3. Opening of Bids	20 October 2006, 10:00 AM
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,170.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–Sept. 26, 2006)

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** invites PhilGEPS registered contractors to apply for the following items:

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date / Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Development of Former CDCP Area, Zone IV	P 15,657,653.00	Oct. 17, 2006 10:00 AM	Oct. 30, 2006 10:00 AM	P 5,000.00
2. Construction of Museum at the Jardin Maria Clara L. Lobregat, Pasonanca Park	P 11,917,599.45	Oct. 17, 2006 10:00 AM	Oct. 30, 2006 10:00 AM	P 4,000.00
3. Development of Jardin Maria Clara L. Lobregat at Pasonanca Park	P 16,504,037.76	Oct. 17, 2006 10:00 AM	Oct. 30, 2006 10:00 AM	P 5,000.00

The last day of the submission of the accomplished eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on **October 3, 2006** at 12:00 Noon in the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting **October 4 to 13, 2006** upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at **City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.**

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope in the bid box located at the above-mentioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at telephone no. **[062] 992-7763.**

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Sept. 21 & 26, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Ombudsman Building, Agham Road, North Triangle,
Diliman, Quezon City
TELEFAX # 929-37-59

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

RE-BIDDING FOR ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) UNITS PERSONAL COMPUTER AND TEN (10) UNITS NOTEBOOK COMPUTER

The **OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**, through its continuing appropriation, intends to apply the sum of **EIGHT MILLION ONE HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND PESOS (Php 8,110,000.00)** for the **Office of the Ombudsman One Hundred Twenty (120) Units Personal Computer and Ten (10) Units Notebook Computer**, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The **OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN** now invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for the said requirement. Delivery of the goods/services is required within the period as prescribed in the bidding documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder/s with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. In case two (2) or more bidders tie in the financial proposals, and are eventually found to be equally post-qualified "drawing of lots" shall be resorted to as the tie-breaking method in accordance with GPPB Circular No. 06-2005. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lone Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) determined after Post Qualification, or after the drawing of lots in case of tie.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, inspect and/or purchase the Bidding Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Eight Thousand Pesos** (Php 8,000.00) at the address given below beginning **OCTOBER 4, 2006** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on **OCTOBER 26, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check and in an amount not less than the amount provided hereunder:

FORM OF SECURITY	MINIMUM AMOUNT OF % OF ABC TO BE BID
1. Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 ½%)
3. Surety Bond (GSIS only)	Two and a half percent (2 ½%)

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES

1. Issuance of Bid and Eligibility Documents	-	04 October 2006 - BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
2. Pre-bid Conference	-	10 October 2006 @ 10:00 AM BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
3. Last day for Issuance of Clarification/Supplemental Bid Bulletin	-	17 October 2006 BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
4. Deadline of submission of Eligibility Documents & Bids		26 October 2006 @ 9:00 AM BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.
5. Opening of Bids	-	26 October 2006 @ 9:30 AM BAC Secretariat, GSD Office of the Ombudsman Building, Q.C.

The **OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
2/F Ombudsman Bldg., Agham Road,
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 926-9032 local 221 / 929-3759
Email: cas@ombudsman.gov.ph
Website : www.ombudsman.gov.ph

(Sgd.) ROBERT E. KALLOS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – September 26, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION
CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
Baguio City 2600

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communication – Cordillera Administrative Region (DOTC-CAR), Baguio City is inviting interested Suppliers to submit bids for the following:

LOT A:
DESCRIPTION: **FOUR (4) Units – SMOKE OPACITY METERS with TACHO METERS and Additional FOUR (4) Units TACHO METERS**

LOT B:
DESCRIPTION: **THREE (3) Units Mobile Base Transceiver Radio, ONE (1) Unit Fixed Base Radio, SIX (6) Units Handheld Radios**

(Note: Interested Bidders may Bid by LOT or ALL)

BID ACTIVITIES

Oct. 04-05, 2006	-	**Submission of Eligibility Documents with Letter Of Intent (LOI) and Application for eligibility (Secure application form from the BAC Secretariat)**
Oct. 09, 2006	-	**Pre-Bid Conference and Issuance of Bid Documents to Pre-qualified Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00**
Oct. 12, 2006	-	**Dropping & Opening of BIDS**

For other inquiries, interested parties may see the BAC secretariat or call the following Telephone Nos.: (074) 3042459, (074) 3043175 and (074)442-8238.

The Department of Transportation and Communications – Cordillera Administrative Region reserves the right to accept, reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) CELINA B. CLAVER
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – Sept. 24, 26 & 28, 2006)

OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICE

ISIDORA BUELVA PILLOGO
of Balaton, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur
Died on September 24, 2006
at the age of 80.
Her body lies in state at
Imperial Funeral Homes,
Peñafrancia Avenue, Naga City.
Interment to be announced later.

In Loving Memory
of Our Dearly Beloved

Wilhelmina Montenegro Festin

Peacefully joined the Lord
on September 24, 2006 at the age of 62.

Her beloved husband **Ret. Col. Niceto F. Festin**; children: **Jules & Arnold, Nina & Kenneth, Mike & Sonia**; and all her grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, brother and sister-in-laws, request fervent prayers and special petitions for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel Q, Guadalupe. The Concelebrated Mass of the Resurrection will be offered at 9:00 a.m., Friday, September 29, 2006.

Interment will follow immediately at the Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue, Marikina City.

ESTRELLA BALLESTEROS MICHELENA

of Irosin, Sorsogon

Peacefully joined her Creator
on September 22, 2006 at the age of 78.

Her beloved husband **Peping**; daughters **Marilou** and **Marivic**; sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, brothers, sisters and friends, request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their residence in Irosin, Sorsogon.

Interment will be on Saturday, September 30, 2006 at Irosin Catholic Cemetery after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at St. Michael Parish Church.

Anita Amaguin de Guzman

Went to her eternal reward
on 22 September 2006 at the age of 84.

Her body lies in state at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Philamlife Village, Las Piñas City.

Cremation will be tomorrow, September 27, 2 pm, at the Manila Memorial Crematorium, Sucat, Parañaque.

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BUSINESS

Easing of micro lending rules seen

Waiver of ITR requirement planned for small enterprises

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS is willing to let banks exclude income tax returns from their list of requirements for lending but only for micro-enterprises or those with assets of P3 million and below.

The waiver of Bureau of Internal Revenue-stamped ITR for small-scale borrowers was among the measures proposed by the Export Development Council to the 2006 national competitiveness summit. This was aimed at increasing credit flow in the country.

The measure can be implemented through the revival of an executive order that waived the ITR requirement for small-scale enterprises, or businesses with assets of more than P3 million but not exceeding P15 million, applying for bank loans.

But the BSP, in a position paper, said it wanted only micro-enterprises to be covered by the ITR waiver.

"An SME which has assets of at least P3 million should be responsible enough to file ITRs and submit copies of which to support their loan applications," BSP managing director Celia Gonzales said in a letter to the Export Development Council dated Sept. 7.

The BSP also begged out of the list of institutions that would be tasked with prodding lenders to develop venture capital financing programs for SMEs.

"This may be problematic for us as such programs involve greater credit risks and may not jibe with the BSP's responsibilities as regulator of the banking industry," Gonzales said.

On regulations governing collateral requirements, she clarified that under present BSP rules, agricultural land was acceptable for loans granted by rural and cooperative banks. These are also acceptable for loans rediscounted by banks, provided it is supported by a Department of Agrarian Reform clearance.

In the meantime, the BSP rejected proposals to exempt SMEs from rules governing real estate mortgage and chattel mortgage.

"To exempt SMEs from these rules would increase risks of noncollection and may not be in accordance with good banking practice. We are therefore not in favor of this proposal," she said.

Difficulty in getting credit was among the factors that contributed to the Philippines' decline in global ranking in ease of doing business to 126th from 121st, out of 175 countries.

Under the International Finance Corp.-World Bank's annual survey on doing business, access to credit is consistently rated by firms as one of the greatest barriers to operations and growth.

The 2007 survey suggested that access to credit might be expanded significantly by credit registries—institutions that gather and disseminate information on credit histories. It added that effective regulations on secured lending—through collateral and bankruptcy laws—are another solution to credit constraints.

FLI buying properties worth ₱12B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY FIRM FILINVEST LAND INC. (FLI) yesterday said its board had agreed to buy controlling interests in PBCom Tower in Makati City, and in Festival Supermall and Northgate Cyberzone both in Alabang for P12.3 billion.

These assets are hoped to allow FLI to tap into the high-growth mall and business process outsourcing businesses.

Company officials said the assets would be partly paid with 5.64 billion newly issued FLI shares worth P9.8 billion. Also, the company will assume P2.5 billion worth of debts of these properties to its parent firm, Filinvest Development Corp., and Filinvest Alabang Inc. in exchange for their interests in PBCom Tower, Festival Supermall and Northgate Cyberzone.

PBCom Tower is a joint venture between Filinvest Asia and Philippine Bank of Communications. Filinvest Asia is, in turn, 60- percent owned by FDC and 40 percent by Reco of Singapore. FLI will acquire FDC's 60-percent stake in Filinvest Asia.

FLI will also buy FAI's 100-percent stake in Festival Mall.

Cyberzone Properties , the owner and developer of The Northgate Cyberzone, is 60-percent owned by FAI and 40 percent by foreign investment firm Africa Israel.

FAI's 60-percent interest in the Cyberzone project will be acquired by FLI.

The planned acquisition will add more than 105,000 square meters in gross leasable area to FLI's portfolio.

This move will increase the company's asset base, diversify its income sources, and allow its investors to participate in the booming BPO sector. The firm believes this move will provide strong and stable recurring revenues and add development potential to its existing revenue stream.

Cyberzone Properties Inc (CPI) is 60-percent owned by FAI. It is a Philippine Economic Zone Authority-registered facility and was formed to own and develop IT buildings in Northgate Cyberzone.

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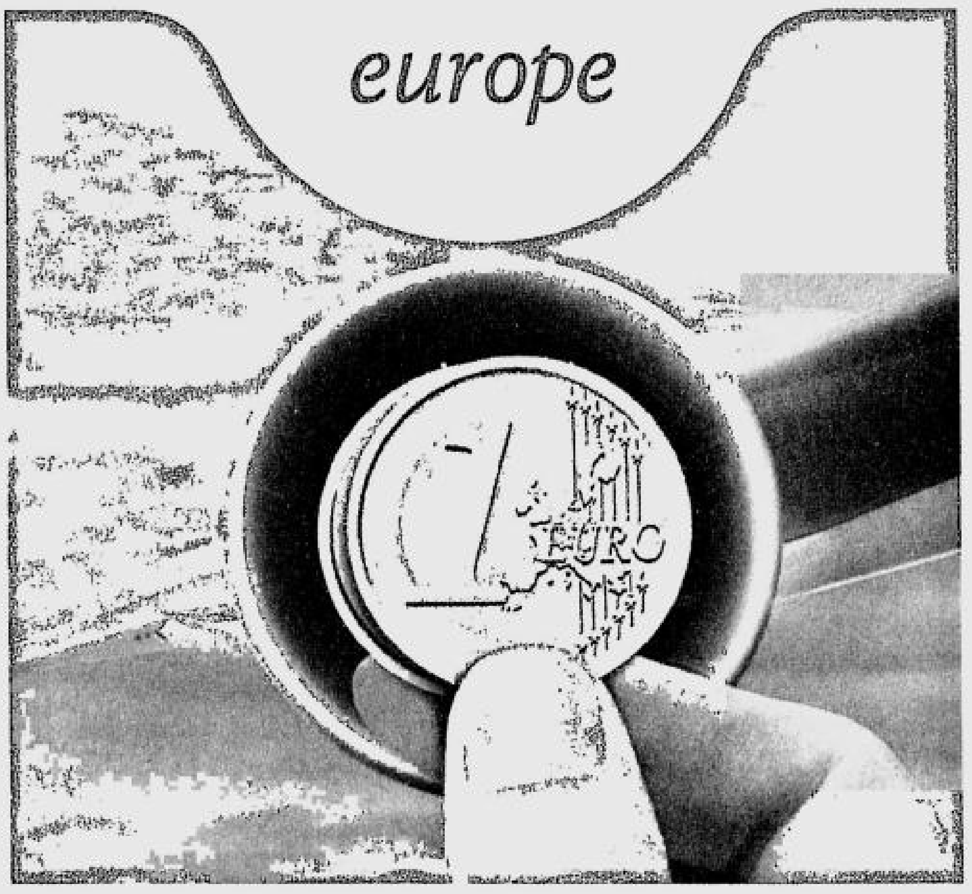

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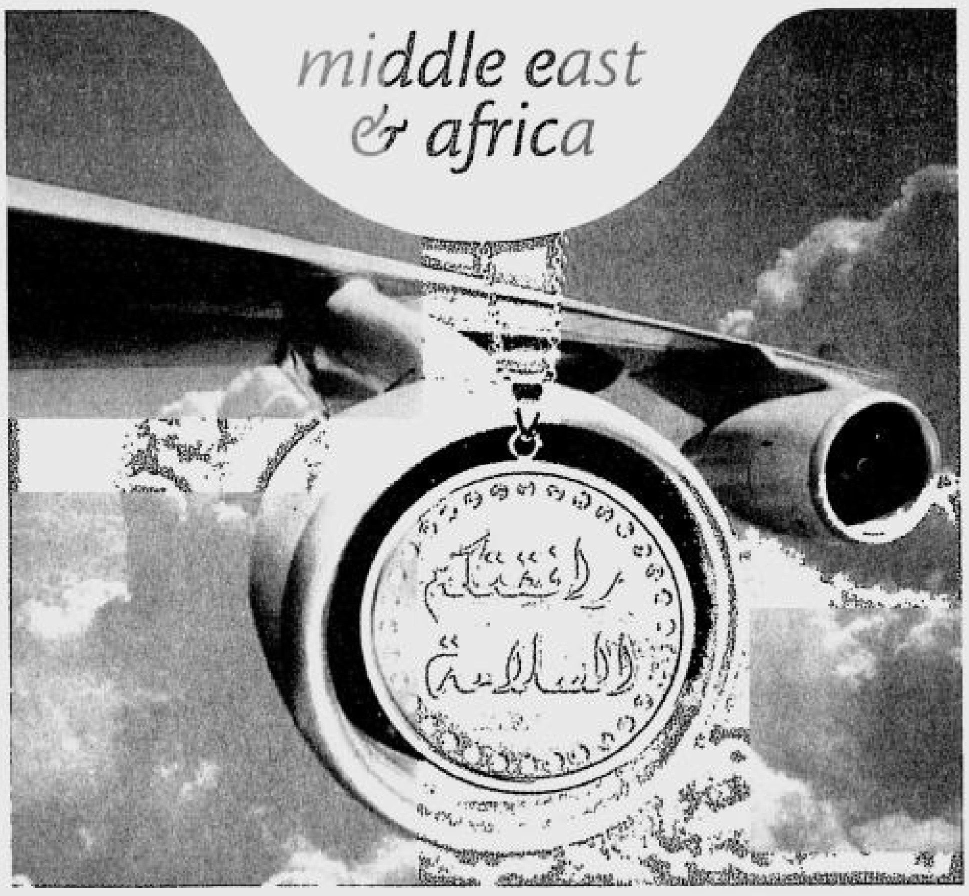

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IN THIS ISSUE

- **Today is a** present /C3

Pillow Pals
Get these cute pillows with any purchase of Prokids Baby Diapers!
Have a peek on page C-3

Mind-body techniques for everyday life

Part One

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

YOU MAY NOT KNOW THE difference between a *chakra* and *asana* but that doesn't mean you can't benefit from the basic principles of yoga or other mind-body formats.

So even if you don't have the time or inclination to attend a yoga, tai chi or Pilates class, a simple technique inspired by these disciplines can help you ease the stress and tension of everyday life.

The cornerstone of any mind-body practice is "breathe, relax and focus." This is true even for martial arts like kung fu or aikido. The best fighter is a relaxed fighter.

Breathe

Your breath is the bridge that links your mind and your body. If your breathing is rapid and shallow, it can trigger tension in the body and exacerbate stress in the mind. But if you slow down your breathing, both your mind and your body begin to relax. This appears to be an automatic physiological response.

So the first step to relieve stress is simply to slow down the breath. As you become more experienced, you will become aware of a "rising and sinking" feeling or an "expanding and contracting" sensation in the ribcage and belly.

Relax

Part of the natural response to stress is tense muscles. This is useful if you are about to fight a tiger or flee from it. But chronic muscle tension from chronic stress can produce a stiff neck, tight shoulders, clenched jaw and tension headaches.

So you need to consciously relax your shoulder muscles while you breathe slowly. Relax your shoulders by gently drawing them away from your ears. Then, soften the muscles in the jaw and face. You will feel the stress literally melting away.

These two things—breathing slowly and relaxing your shoulders—will result in the third component of the "mind-body-spirit" triumvirate, which is an increased sense of focus and concentration.

Everyday stress

It's not just the big decisions or events in life that can cause stress. Even simple things like making a grocery list or thinking about the errands you have to do for the day can leave you feeling harassed and anxious.

Try the "breathe, relax and focus" technique for daily situations that have the potential to stress you out. It's easy, it can be practiced any time of the day or night, and it can make a significant positive change in your life.

You may not realize how tense your shoulders become as you furiously answer cell phone texts. It may be the quantity of the messages or the content itself that is causing you to churn out more stress hormones than your body needs.

But you can counteract this by relaxing shoulders and slowing down both your breath and the speed at which you are composing text messages. This technique can also save you from impulsive decisions like rapid-fire text or e-mail replies that you will live to regret.

You can also use it to become more productive when you work on the computer. You will have fewer aches and pains in your shoulders, neck, hands and wrists, and your ideas will flow much more easily.

Stress can start early in the morning when you are rushing to get dressed for work. Even if you overslept and are in danger of becoming late for work, rushing around your room is not going to do you any good.

That's when you cut your gums because you are brushing too hard, poke your eye while putting on mascara because your hand is trembling, and you turn your closet upside-down because the outfit you want to wear is playing hide-and-seek with you.

Slow breathing and relaxed shoulders don't mean you move in slow motion. It might seem like time is slowing down but you are actually saving time because your mind is more concentrated on what you are doing. You avoid disasters like spilling coffee on your jacket just as you are heading out of your house.

Untangling twisted electrical cords or setting up a complicated sound system can leave you impatient and irritated. Before you become frustrated enough to throw things, settle down by breathing slowly, lowering your shoulders, and focusing on the job at hand. You will see the "solution" more clearly.

Blow-drying your hair or fixing high shelves in a closet can make your neck and shoulder muscles tense even if these activities don't stress your mind or emotions. It is possible to relax and lower your shoulders even when your arms are overhead. Try it. You can prevent the tight knots that can develop from shoulders that are chronically worn as "earrings."

Cursing at "stupid" drivers who rudely cut in front of your car or change lanes without warning will not change the way they drive. The only thing you have in your control is your response to the situation. You can either stew in toxic stress hormones or you can protect your health and sanity by practicing the simple mind-body technique of "breathe, relax and focus." The choice is yours.

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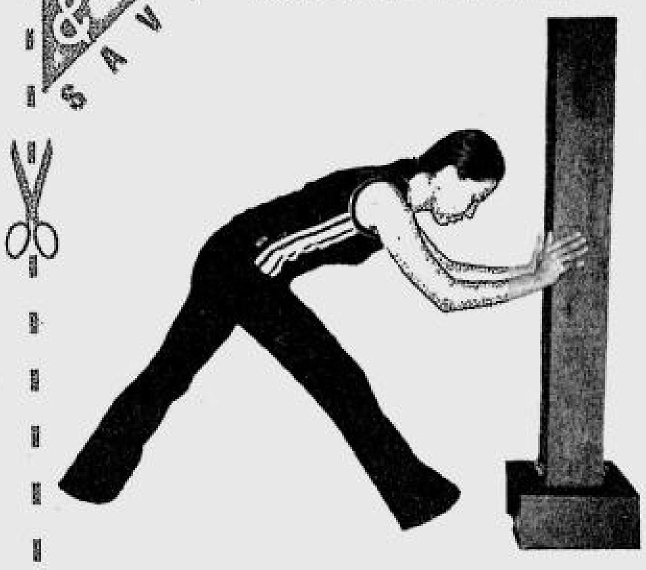
CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Asymmetrical forward bend

THIS EXERCISE STRETCHES THE back of the legs and the lower back.

Equipment:
A wall or post

Exercise technique:
1. Stand with one foot against the wall or a post. The other foot should be facing straight ahead.
2. Walk your hands down the post to lower your torso into a forward bend.
3. Hold the stretch for the desired length of time.
4. Walk your hands up the post to straighten up. Do the other side.

Performance tips:
1. Widen your stance by moving your leg backward if you feel you need more of a stretch.
2. If you have adequate flexibility in your hamstrings, lower your head down toward your toes to feel the stretch in the lower back.
3. Bend your front knee if you feel pressure at the back of the knee joint.

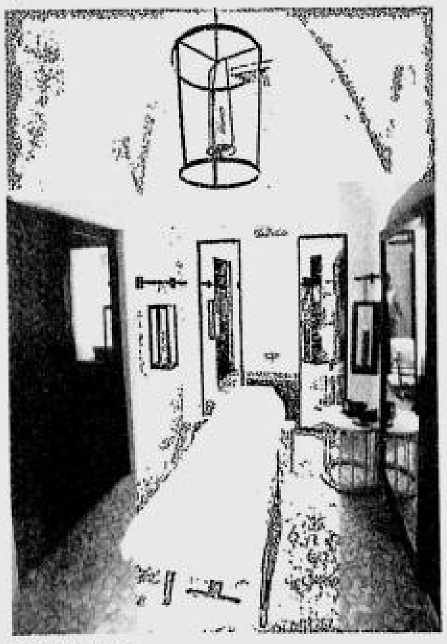
Repetitions:
Hold the stretch for at least 10 seconds.

Monastic look for new spa

THROUGH THE YEARS THE SPA HAS become the place to go for the healing and rejuvenation of body and spirit. Its first branch in Acropolis has spawned three more. Each has different look—Asian Minimalist in Acropolis, Tropical in Alabang, Moroccan in Bel-Air and Oriental Thai in Greenbelt.

The Spa recently opened its latest branch on the fifth level of The Podium. This time the inspiration for interior designer Ivy Almario and architect Francis Ong is monastic.

HERBAL Massage gives body comfort and relief after a busy day at work.



FACIAL room

At the unveiling, Bizu served Hellenic-themed dishes. Executive manager Richard Uy, sales and marketing manager Rita Galila Marcos and branch head Aimee Bulay welcomed the guests led by TV personality Lucy Torres-Gomez along with The Spa's image model TV host-actress Angel Aquino.

The new branch offers a complete array of relaxing and revitalizing treatments. Body massage therapies include Swedish, Shiatsu, Deep Tissue, Aromatherapy, Twin, Volcanic Rock, Herbal, Thai and the traditional *hilot* massages.

For the head and shoulder, there are Aromascalp and Shoulder massage, Indian Head Massage, and Moor Spa Hair and Scalp Treatment.

Facial treatment offerings include Aromafacial Massage, Fango Mud Facial, Moor Spa Facial, Phytomer Marine Youth Facial, Phytomer Sea Soothing Facial, Decleor Vitamin C Radiance Facial, Decleor Wheat Nourishing Facial.

Body care treatments to help the body detoxify and achieve vitality are Moor Mud Body Wrap, Javanese Royal Bath, Detoxifying Body Wrap, Indian Ayurvedic Body Treatment, Coffee Rub, Sea Salt Body Scrub and Honey Body Polish.

Foot care treatments include Oriental Foot Therapy, Peppermint Foot Rub and Thai Foot Massage.

The Spa has evolved from a sanctuary where one can have the best massage to a one-stop health facility with a modern and ultra-hip gym center in Acropolis that boasts of the latest gym equipment and aerobics, yoga and Pilates classes plus a four-court badminton center.

The Spa is accredited by the International Spa Association and the Department of Tourism. Visit www.thespa.com.ph or e-mail thespa@thespa.com.ph.

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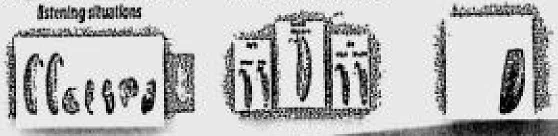

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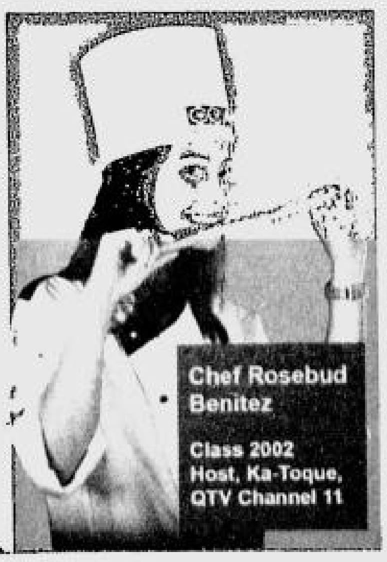
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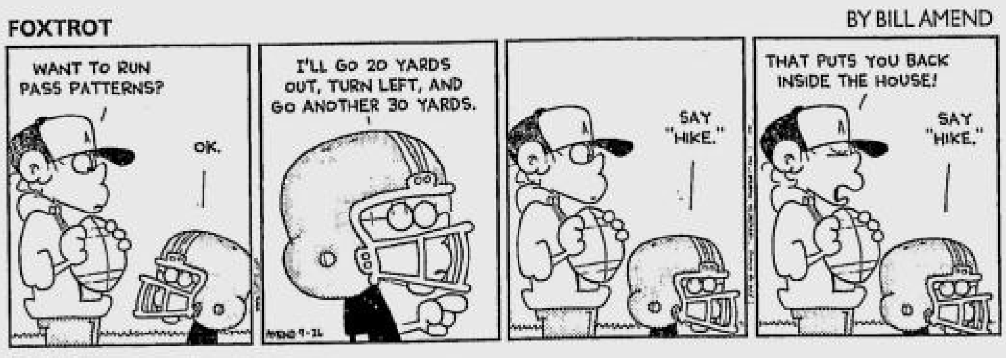
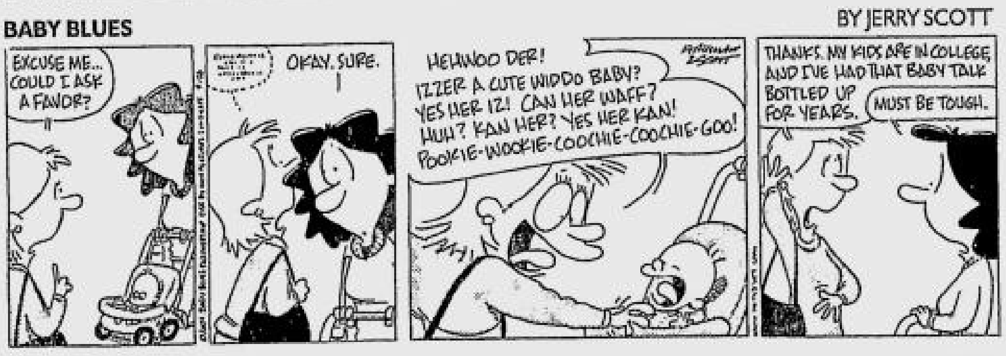
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WANT TO RUN PASS PATTERNS?
OK.
I'LL GO 20 YARDS OUT, TURN LEFT, AND GO ANOTHER 30 YARDS.
SAY "HIKE."
THAT PUTS YOU BACK INSIDE THE HOUSE!
SAY "HIKE."
AMEND 9-26

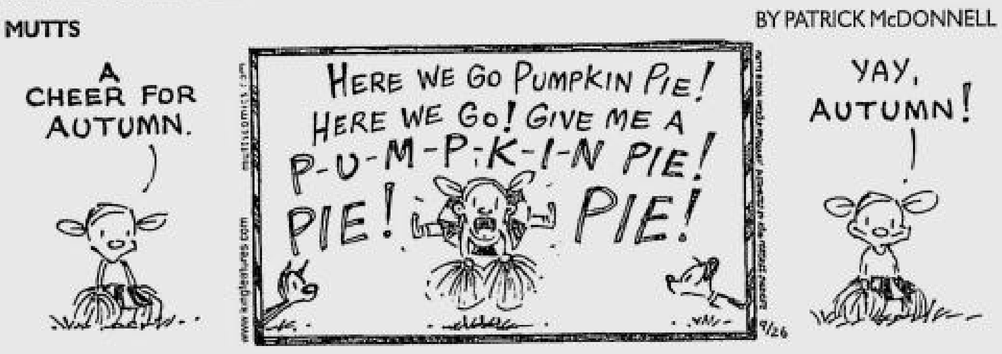
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


EXCUSE ME... COULD I ASK A FAVOR?
OKAY. SURE.
HEWWOO DER! IZZER A CUTE WIDDO BABY? YES HER IZ! CAN HER WAFF? HUH? KAN HER? YES HER KAN! POOKIE-WOOKIE-COOCHIE-COOCHIE-GOO!
THANKS. MY KIDS ARE IN COLLEGE AND I'VE HAD THAT BABY TALK BOTTLED UP FOR YEARS.
MUST BE TOUGH.

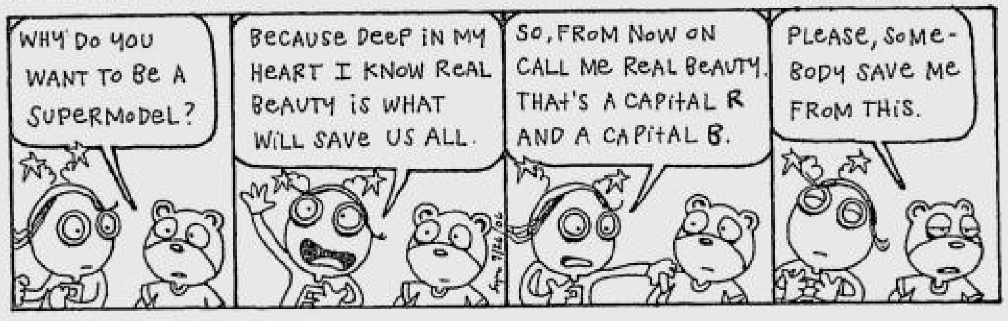
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


A CHEER FOR AUTUMN.
HERE WE GO PUMPKIN PIE! HERE WE GO! GIVE ME A P-U-M-P-K-I-N PIE! PIE! PIE!
YAY, AUTUMN!
9/26

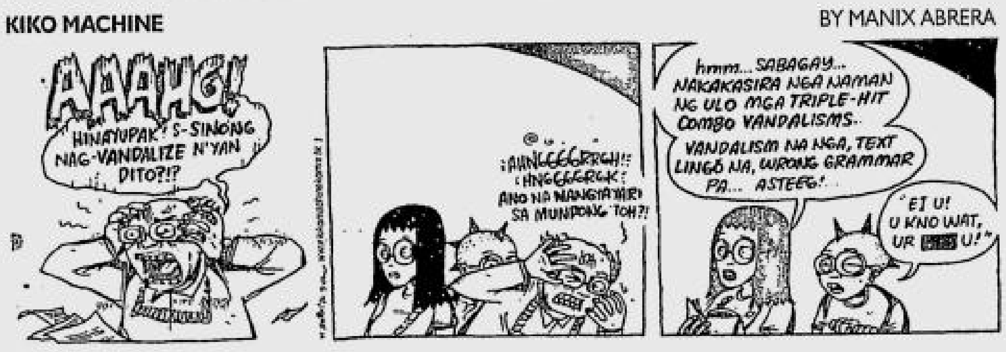
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A SUPERMODEL?
BECAUSE DEEP IN MY HEART I KNOW REAL BEAUTY IS WHAT WILL SAVE US ALL.
SO, FROM NOW ON CALL ME REAL BEAUTY. THAT'S A CAPITAL R AND A CAPITAL B.
PLEASE, SOMEBODY SAVE ME FROM THIS.

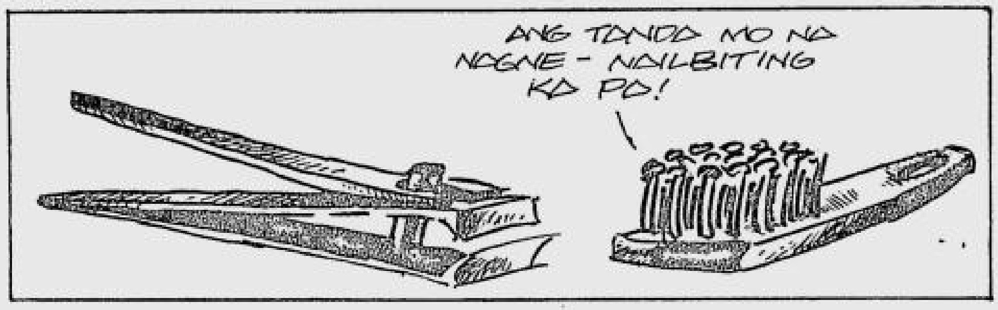
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AAAHG!
HINAYUPAK! S-SINONG NAG-VANDALIZE N'YAN DITO?!?
¡AHNGGGGRGH!! ¡HNGGGRGK! ANO NA NANGYARI SA MUNDONG 'TOH?!
hmm... SABAGAY... NAKAKASIRA NGA NAMAN NG ULO MGA TRIPLE-HIT COMBO VANDALISMS..
VANDALISM NA NGA, TEXT LINGO NA, WRONG GRAMMAR PA... ASTEEG!
'EJ U! U KNO WAT, UR [redacted] U!'

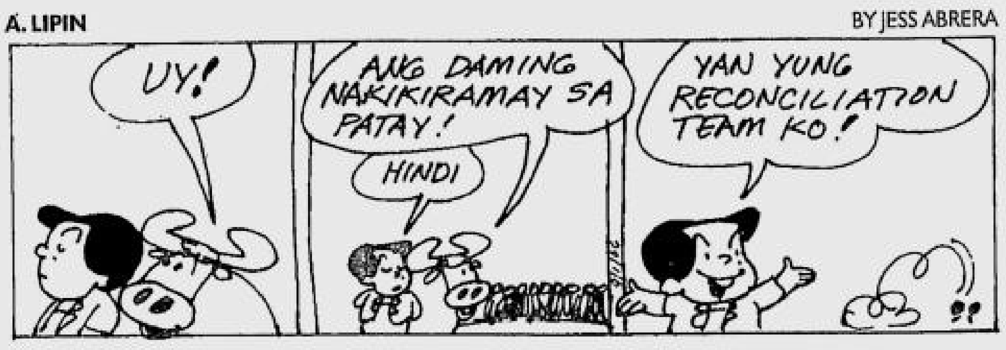
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG TANDA MO NA NAGNE - NAILBITING KA PA!

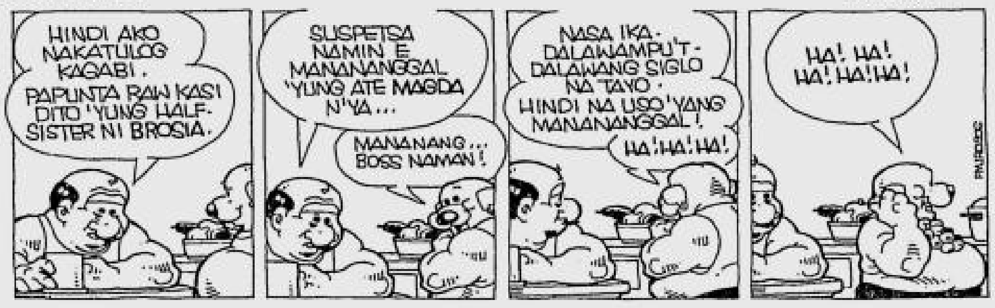
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


UY!
ANG DAMING NAKIKIRAMAY SA PATAY!
HINDI
YAN YUNG RECONCILIATION TEAM KO!

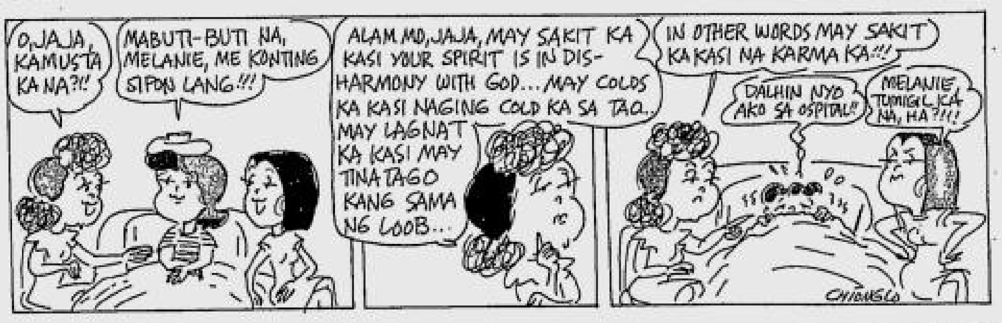
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI AKO NAKATULOG KAGABI. PAPUNTA RAW KASI DITO 'YUNG HALF-SISTER NI BROSIA.
SUSPETSA NAMIN E MANANANGGAL 'YUNG ATE MAGDA N'YA...
MANANANG... BOSS NAMAN!
NASA IKA-DALAWAMPU'T-DALAWANG SIGLO NA TAYO. HINDI NA USO 'YANG MANANANGGAL!
HA!HA!HA!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

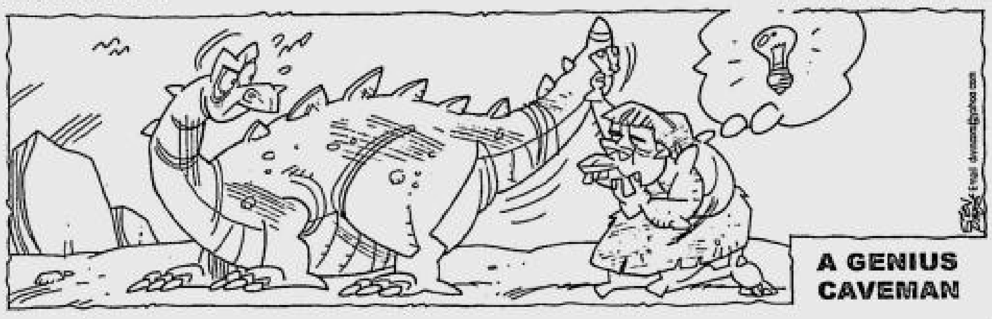
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


O, JAJA, KAMUSTA KA NA?!!
MABUTI-BUTI NA, MELANIE, ME KONTING SIPON LANG!!!
ALAM MO, JAJA, MAY SAKIT KA KASI YOUR SPIRIT IS IN DISHARMONY WITH GOD... MAY COLDS KA KASI NAGING COLD KA SA TAO.
MAY LAGNAT KA KASI MAY TINATAGO KANG SAMA NG LOOB...
IN OTHER WORDS MAY SAKIT KA KASI NA KARMA KA!!!
DALHIN NYO AKO SA OSPITAL!!
MELANIE, TUMIGIL KA NA, HA?!!!
CHIONGLO

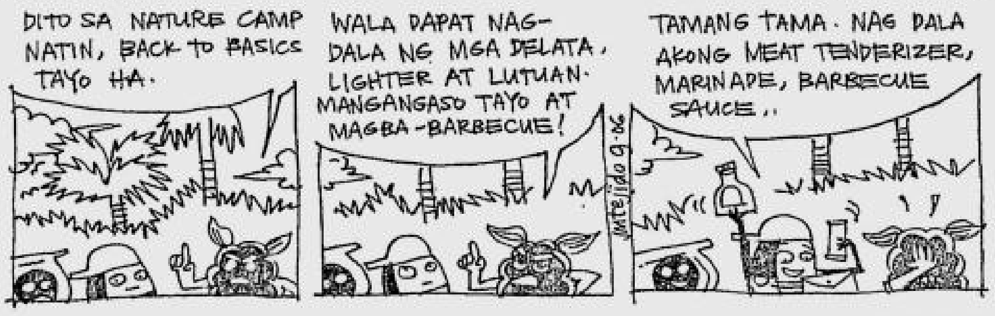
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


A GENIUS CAVEMAN

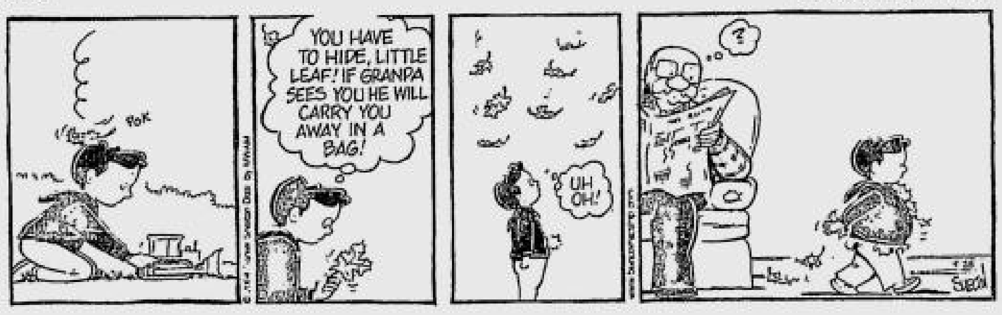
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

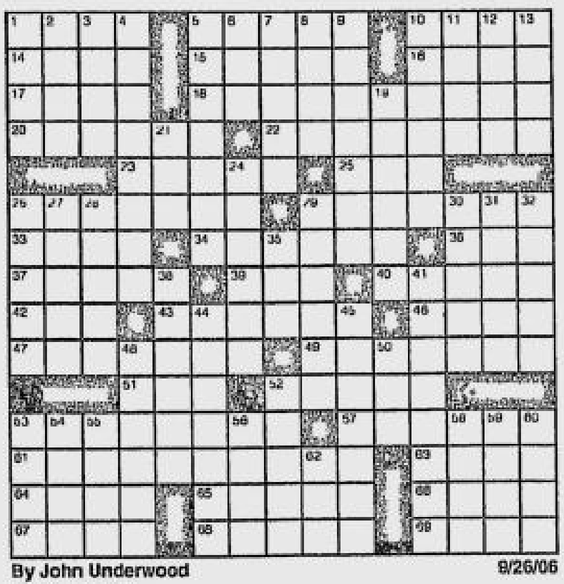

DITO SA NATURE CAMP NATIN, BACK TO BASICS TAYO HA.
WALA DAPAT NAG-DALA NG MGA DELATA, LIGHTER AT LUTUAN. MANGANGASO TAYO AT MAGBA-BARBECUE!
TAMANG TAMA. NAG DALA AKONG MEAT TENDERIZER, MARINADE, BARBECUE SAUCE..
tejido 9.06

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


POK
YOU HAVE TO HIDE, LITTLE LEAF! IF GRANPA SEES YOU HE WILL CARRY YOU AWAY IN A BAG!
UH OH!
?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By John Underwood
New York, NY

9/26/06

ACROSS

1 Subtle info
5 Garners
10 Cyberspace place
14 Grunted denial
15 White heron
16 Smell
17 God of discord
18 Xenophobic fear
20 Short synopsis
22 Comment in the margin
23 Hotsy-__
25 Acacia tree
26 Sure thing
29 Acrophobic fear
33 For two, in music
34 Tennessee's streetcar
36 Drivers' org.
37 Heron's cousin
39 Primary color
40 Invitation replies
42 Rib
43 Put the whammy on
46 "QB VII" author
47 Arachnophobic fear
49 Chicken coop
51 Clue dir.
52 Fossil resin
53 Isolation
57 Addictive drug
61 Agoraphobic fear
63 Joyless
64 Fisherman's chum
65 Threefold
66 Steering mechanism
67 Do in
68 On-court stabbing victim
69 See ya!

DOWN

1 Wahine's dance
2 Flapjack chain
3 Microwave?
4 Triskaideka-phobic fear
5 Shot down
6 Self-image
7 Display
8 Part of a hammerhead
9 Lead balloon
10 "Illness as Metaphor" writer
11 Creative spark
12 Civil wrong
13 Gaelic tongue
19 More viscous
21 Male swan
24 Aft areas
26 Defensive stats
27 "With blood the trees were all __" (Bierce)
28 King of Egypt, 1922-36
29 Cab Calloway catch phrase
30 Le __, France
31 Tropical ungulate
32 Smart-alecky
35 Form query
38 Casts out
41 Heliophobic fear
44 Breaks into
45 Removes from office
48 Delicate
50 Snooze
52 Seasick sea serpent
53 Breaks into tears
54 October stone
55 "Star Wars" princess
56 Be gutsy
58 Vicinity
59 Slant
60 Thompson of "Wit"
62 WSW opposite

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	L	A	S	P	■	A	L	T	I	■	E	D	D	A
A	O	R	T	A	■	R	O	A	R	■	N	O	E	L
D	O	N	A	L	D	D	U	C	K	■	F	U	M	E
S	T	O	R	M	I	E	S	T	■	P	O	B	O	X
■	■	■	K	I	R	B	Y	■	D	E	L	L	■	■
O	D	D	E	S	T	■	■	P	O	N	D	E	R	S
B	E	A	S	T	■	S	A	L	O	N	■	D	E	E
O	B	I	T	■	M	A	D	A	M	■	M	A	C	E
L	I	L	■	F	U	S	S	Y	■	S	E	T	U	P
S	T	Y	L	I	S	H	■	■	M	E	T	E	R	S
■	■	■	D	A	L	E	■	C	L	I	N	E	■	■
G	N	O	M	E	■	W	Y	A	N	D	O	T	T	E
R	A	Z	E	■	D	I	C	K	D	U	R	B	I	N
A	M	E	N	■	I	D	L	E	■	P	I	A	N	O
B	E	N	T	■	G	E	E	S	■	S	C	R	E	W

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9/25/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a persevering nature, which serves you well. Many of you have highly developed technological skills in a particular area. You're a perfectionist: You strive to master your craft. You have a logical mind, and you're hardworking. People love your humor and wit. Many of you have other skills or jobs that are secret or unknown. You will learn something valuable and important this year. Stay alert!

Birthdate of: Julie London, singer; Linda Hamilton, actress; George Gershwin, composer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Take care of red-tape details with insurance matters, wills, inheritances and other people's wealth or property. You might feel quite intensely about something today

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Conversations with partners and close friends might be more emotional than usual today. You might also feel parental or nurturing to someone.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Work hard to accomplish much at work today. Attend to details. Coworkers are supportive. Do anything that helps you feel you're more organized in your life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a playful, prankish day. Activities with children, plus liaisons with romantic interests, are a top priority. Enjoy the arts, catch a movie or watch some sports.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Home, family and real estate matters are your top priorities today. Family discussions in particular will be significant. Talk to parents if possible.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to run around taking care of errands, shopping and many little tasks. Short trips are likely. Expect conversations with siblings and relatives.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Check your bank account today. Stay on top of your finances. This is a good day for shopping, minor business and commerce. Ignore criticisms from others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The Moon is in your sign today. This makes you feel more emotional about things. For a brief time, in the middle of the day, you might feel a bit down. Fortunately, this passes quickly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Work behind the scenes or by yourself if you can today. You need some rest and relaxation. At the very least, you need some solitude.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A conversation with a female friend might be important today. Give this person your undivided attention. Perhaps someone needs to share his or her pain or joy with you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might do something that briefly calls attention to you today. (In fact, it's likely.) Be aware that others will notice you, because you might be setting an example.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel restless! You want to escape from your routine, day-to-day work. You want to learn something new or travel somewhere different. If you can do this, by all means do so!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	5	2	9		3	6		
6			4				3	
7			6					4
2	1	8						9
				4				
9						7	2	6
8					4			3
	6				5			2
		4	3		7	5	6	

Difficulty Level ★★

9/26

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	1	2	6	9	8	5	7	3
3	9	8	7	5	4	1	6	2
5	6	7	2	3	1	8	4	9
9	7	1	8	4	6	2	3	5
8	4	6	5	2	3	9	1	7
2	3	5	9	1	7	6	8	4
6	8	9	4	7	2	3	5	1
1	5	4	3	8	9	7	2	6
7	2	3	1	6	5	4	9	8

Difficulty Level ★

Living for the present moment

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

"No time like the present."
–Mary Manley

A POPULAR TEXT MESSAGE being passed around goes something like this: "Don't fret over the past, it's gone. And worrying about the future makes today stressful. Instead, live for the moment. Today is a gift, that's why it's called the present."

Stress vs the present

Living for the present moment is not possible unless one loosens the grip of fear. Other blocks in one's psyche can freeze one in the past or paralyze a person to make him unable to focus on the future.

World-renowned expert on holistic health Dr. Deepak Chopra says stress is not really about problems concerning today. "Instead we feel anxiety because we anticipate pain in the future or we feel depression, guilt or sorrow because we brood on pain from the past. Freeing yourself of past and future relieves you of stress."

Survival mode

Basic human survival is the concept of living in the present. To illustrate, here is a story:

Carla had fallen in love with Louie who lived in another country. Louie planned to move to be with Carla. But because he had business matters to clear up, the transfer was taking longer than expected.

Meanwhile, Carla worried more as each day passed. Her fears slowly overcame her. Would their dream of being together ever happen? Would she have to be the one to move, give up her job?

> If you have done all there is to do today, there's no need to worry about what has to be done tomorrow

The questions never gave her peace until Louie told her, "Please do not forget that we are happy now. Things are okay between us."

This simple statement gave Carla her moment of enlightenment. She learned that if one could focus on the present moment, lives could be lived more happily.

Tips for living today

- Do the best you can now in preparation for the future.
- Put attention on tomorrow by planning things today.
- Once you have prepared well, do not worry about what has to be done tomorrow because you have done all there is to do today.
- Throw away your list of wrongs—a long list of who has hurt you and how many times. This will only weigh you down, says Jeff Davidson, author of "Breathing Space."
- By doing so, you need not worry about losing your spouse, job, home, sanity, health, because you have already done your best.

Exercise one

Disintegrating worry:

Write a letter (which you will never send) to somebody whom you trust. Describe your concerns, hurts, etc. Just let the feelings flow. As you write, insights will surface to guide you.

Exercise two

Life themes:

List down 12 major turning points in your life. Write for 10 minutes about any one of them. Put away what you have written. Next day, write once more. After reading three episodes of your life, re-read them and see if there are any similarities in themes.

Life message

The only antidote for stress and its dramatic effects on our lives is harmony. This harmony can be achieved by being aware of grace in your life and how it is working in your life—harmony that is both inner and outer.

For one cannot possibly exude outer harmony without inner peace and inner grace.

Calming facial mask

Drink a warm cup of water. Add a few mint leaves. Chew a sprig of mint. Slowly sip the mint water.

In a blender, add half a cucumber, 1 tablespoon of milk and mint leaves. Once well mixed, apply onto your clean face. Leave on for seven minutes. Relax and refresh!

Affirmation

"Today, I will live like never before."

Love and light!

Reference: "How To Master Change in Your Life" by Mary Carroll Moore

Do-it-yourself foot pampering

SPA set consists of foot soak, scrub, lotion and

GIVE YOUR LEGS AND FEET MUCH-needed relief by indulging in an invigorating spa right in the comfort of your home at least twice a week.

Zen Zest, makers of high-quality affordable personal care products, has launched the Do-It-Yourself Foot Spa. The set consists of Peppermint Foot Soak, Peppermint Foot Scrub, Peppermint Foot Lotion and Peppermint Foot Spray.

The soak (P100) helps soften the foot's rough edges while the oil soothes and cools. To use, dissolve 2-3 teaspoons of soak in a basin of warm water for 15-20 minutes. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry.

Exfoliate dead skin cells with the scrub (P220) that contains apricot kernels and tea tree oil. Apricot kernels slough away dry rough skin while the antibacterial tea tree oil disinfects the feet. Massage wet feet, particularly heels and toes. Rinse with warm water and pat dry.

Follow the procedure with the lotion (P200). Infused with soothing aloe vera and Vitamin E, it moisturizes and hydrates the feet. Using circular motions, massage feet and legs. Use daily, if possible.

Finish off with the spray infused with antibacterial tea tree oil.

Zen Zest Do-It-Yourself Foot Spa is available in all Zen Zest carts and kiosks in SM North Edsa—Main, Annex, and The Block; Robinson's Galleria, SM Mall of Asia, SM Sta. Mesa, SM Megamall, Festival Mall, SM Bacoor, SM Valenzuela, Robinson's Ermita, Glorietta, and SM Makati.

Coconut book is out

"COCONUT: THE Philippines' Money Tree" is now off the press.

The 256-page coffee-table book, the first of its kind, was written by Dr. Renato M. Labadan, who was named in 1970 one of Ten Outstanding Young Men for agricultural science. A graduate of the University of the Philippines, he did post-graduate studies at the Ateneo de Manila University, University of Idaho, and Cornell University in New York.

The book outlines the many uses of the coconut from the roots to the leaves. Among its contents are Tracing the Roots of the Coconut Tree, The Tree of Life, The Philippine Coconut Biodiesel: The Perfect Renewable Biodiesel Fuel, and The Remarkable Virgin Coconut Oil.

Copies of the book will be available at Agrilink Oct. 4-7; Unidev, telefax 925-9239; or call 0921-7139822.

MEDICard
Nicky

MEDICard The Healthcare You Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What are the most common causes of cirrhosis in the Philippines?

Liver cirrhosis is an irreversible result of many disorders that damage liver cells. Eventually, the damage becomes so extensive that the normal structure of the liver is distorted and its function is impaired (liver failure). Liver cirrhosis can lead to liver cancer. In the Philippines, Hepatitis B viral infection is one of the leading causes of cirrhosis which is generally transmitted via exposure to infected blood products, unprotected sex with an infected person and being born to infected mothers. Hepatitis C can also cause cirrhosis although it's not common. Alcohol is another common cause where in cirrhosis can develop with as little as two to four drinks per day for a 10-year period. Hepatitis B infection and alcohol are the most common and constitute the majority of cases in our country. There is no specific treatment for cirrhosis and the damage is usually permanent. The best method of dealing with cirrhosis is prevention and treatment of underlying cause. Avoidance or moderation of alcohol intake is recommended and the best way to prevent hepatitis B is by immunization of high risk persons.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Metro Manila, Dr. Wilfrida L. Aguirre. She specializes in IM-Gastroenterology. She obtained her medicine degree from UST in 1995. She took her residency training for Internal Medicine at Makati Medical Center in 1999 and later finished her subspecialty training for Gastroenterology at UST Hospital in 2003. She is a fellow/diplomate of several organizations like the Philippine Society of Gastroenterolog and Philippine Society of Digestive Endoscopy. Presently, she is a training officer at MMC-Gastroenterology section. MEDICARD members may avail of her consultation services at Asian Hospital & Medical Center during Mondays 2pm-5pm, Wednesdays 1pm-5pm & Saturdays 10am-12noon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC.: 8th floor Sagittarius Building H V dela Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Trunklines: [illegible] Fax No.: [illegible] Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk N' Text). E-mail: inquiry@medicardphils.com Website: www.medicardphils.com

FREE!
小淘氣
PROKIDS
Pillow Pals
Get these cute pillows with any purchase of Prokids!

1. Promo Period: September 4 – December 31, 2006
2. Consumers may join by simply collecting wrappers with intact points of Prokids Premium Baby Diapers with Soft Cottony Magic Tape. Points per packaging are as follows:

Prokids Baby Diapers (with Soft Cottony Magic Tape)	Label Points
1 Mini Pack (4s)	1/4 point
1 Big Pack (24s, 22s, 20s, 18s, 16s)	1 point
1 Value Pack (48s, 44s, 40s, 36s, 32s)	2 points

3. Consumers must collect eight (8) points to be able to get one (1) collectible baby pillow design using the corresponding label points.

Pillow Designs	Points
A. Dog B. Pig C. Lion D. Monkey	8 points each

- Only entire wrappers with intact points of Prokids Premium Baby Diaper with Soft Cottony Magic Tape will be accepted.
- Entries containing cut-out points will NOT be honored.

4. Submit the required Prokids Premium Baby Diapers with Soft Cottony Magic Tape wrappers together with the complete information: sender's name, complete address where you want the premium item/s delivered, baby's name and age, telephone and/or mobile phone numbers, signature of parent/guardian plus the desired premium item, written on a piece of paper and enclosed in an envelope. For hard-to-find locations, landmark information of the address is encouraged for easy reference.
5. Entries can be mailed or hand carried to:

"Prokids Pillow Pals"
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc.
31st Floor, Raffles Corporate Center
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City

OR

"Prokids Pillow Pals"
P.O. Box 14280 Pasig City

6. The chosen premium item/s will be delivered by JRS Express to the address submitted by the consumer. In the event that the entry sender is not present during the time of delivery, a member of the sender's household may be asked to sign a proof of delivery and receive the premium item/s in behalf of the entry sender.
7. Entries thru mail are qualified fifteen (15) days after the promo period.
8. Premium items will be delivered until sixty (60) days from the end of the promo period.
9. Consumers may join as many times as they want.
10. Prizes are not convertible to cash.

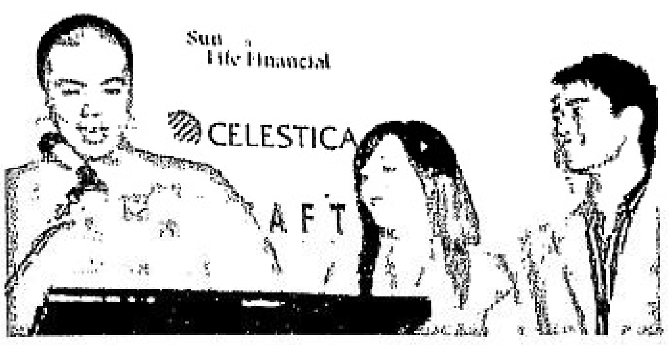
For more information,
please visit www.jsunitrade.com

JRS EXPRESS

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2984, Series of 2006.

GUEST of honor Executive Secretary Ed Ermita with Canadian Ambassador Peter Sutherland and wife Jo-Lynne

TIME correspondent Nelly Sindayen and Canadian Embassy political counselor Steve Rheault Kihara



CANADIAN trade commissioner Francis Uy introduces Nancy Castiglione and Brent Javier, who will promote the Canada's quality education.

BALLADEER Jose Mari Chan and wife Mary Ann Ansaldo

FIL-CANADIAN soprano Joanna Go sang the Philippine and Canadian national anthems.

LEAH Navarro, a long-time resident of Toronto, sings.

Oh Canada!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system

EVERYONE MARKED AS A MUST-GO-TO happening the fabulous celebration of Canada Day.

Well, as soon as I breezed into the grand ballroom of the former New World Hotel, now the popular, upbeat Renaissance Makati Hotel, *moi* was greeted by tons of eye-catching swirls of red and white.

The colors of the Canadian flag were showcased in the ceiling decor, the colorful flower arrangements, and the lights. The ballroom was packed elbow to elbow, with over 600 hotshot invitees from the diplomatic set, the arts, government, business and society.

Naturellement, the piece de resistance was the excellently prepared Canadian-themed menu. Check this out, *palanggas*: salmon, imported Canadian beef, the best wines, plus desserts with maple syrup.

Après dinner, Fil-Canadian **Francis Uy**, trade commissioner at the Canadian embassy, introduced some talented Filipino-Canadian performers who provided live entertainment.

In his short speech *après* a toast of the bubbly with the guest of honor, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary **Erlinda Basilio**, Canadian ambassador to the Philippines **Peter Sutherland** said, "Canada's 400,000 citizens and residents of Philippine origin are assets, both for their country of birth, and their present home country, Canada."

Helping make the happening a total success were behind-the-scene hot personas Consul **Philemon Leroux**, workaholic public affairs officer **Carlo Figueroa**, and program assistant **Princess Apostol**, *palanggas*.

Exotic shopping place

Looking for new flavors and tastes? Seeking exceptional trinkets and accents?

Well, *palanggas*, Shops at Serendra might just be the place with its exciting shopping and dining establishments.

A haven of exotic flavors and distinctive finds, Shops at Serendra combines style and convenience.

"This is not your regular mall," says CJ Jesena, Shops at Serendra Ayala Land Inc. senior division manager. "We focused on one-of-a-kind stores and specialty shops with concepts that have never been seen or tried before."

"Shops at Serendra is another cutting-edge project for the Ayala Malls," adds Ayala Malls vice president for operations Rowena Tomeldan. "It will feature authentic and unique restaurants and specialty shops in a setting that is relaxing and intimate."

The shopping place also gathered some of the most authentic flavors, both homegrown and international, such as Hossein, which is Persian; that excellent Filipino fusion restaurant, Guava; Gaudi, known for its *tapas* and other Spanish delicacies; Rice Table, which serves Asian dishes; Polu Kai Grill, which is Hawaiian; Mezza Luna; plus tons of other restos and great lifestyle stores, *palanggas*.

Check out Shops at Serendra, *palanggas*. I promise you it will definitely be a pleasurable, awesome experience. "After all, it's the only one of its kind in the country today." *Di bala?*

Shu satellite

It makes you beautiful and it has a fab technique, *palanggas*. That's Shu Uemura, the fantastic Japanese cosmetic brand. Being a Shu Uemura fan, *moi* dashed to the launch of their new store design concept, the Satellite Counter at Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall, *palanggas*.

The VIP super event gave the invitees a preview of the awesome new collections and a *tres* exclusive sale, which was a huge success.

As we dined on popular Zen Japanese Restaurant fare and sipped the special Zen Liqueur "saketinis," everyone couldn't help but admire the new store design while getting expert advice from Shu Uemura's wonder woman, **Tina Tinio**; one of Manille's most stylish young ladies, **Tessa Dragon**; and members of Shu Uemura's one-of-a-kind rah-rah makeup team, like imaginative **Xeng Zulueta, Mickey See, Claire Seelin-Diokno, Benjie Angeles** and **Gigi Gonzalez-Uson.**

Shopping till they dropped for Shu Uemura's newest autum/winter makeup collection, "Filigree," were fashion plate **Mons Romulo Tantoco**, gorgeous television personality **Phoemela Barranda, Mich Dulce**, and the unparalleled **Mary Ann Cuenca Tinio**, plus other gals who just love Shu Uemura, dahlings.

In the wise words of Shu Uemura himself, "The counter is the theater, the beauty stylists are the actresses, and the applause of the clients is everything."

Fit to a tea

My *tres charmante palangga*, Monsieur **Philippe Caretti**, Makati Shangri-La's hotshot vice president and general manager, had the fabulous idea of serving a different kind of high tea, dahlings.

After sampling a traditional dessert brought by a member of his staff, he asked the staff to encourage their mothers and grandparents to share traditional Filipino recipes for hotel guests to enjoy.

In less than a month, Philippe C. and his rah! rah! team came up with an elegant, sophisticated and creative Filipino high tea at the hotel's Lobby Lounge, 3-6 p.m., Monday-Sunday, with a live 10-piece female orchestra playing classic Filipino *kundiman*, *palanggas*.

We sat on elegant armchairs and comfy sofas with a cute teddy bear wearing a red jacket on the plush carpet. Philippe C. himself purchased the *tres* delicate silver and chic classic Wedgewood china to complete an afternoon tea setting like no other, *palanggas*.

As we sipped our tea, we had a gorgeous view of the awesome sculptures by artist and gourmet **Claude Tayag**. The seven superb pieces titled "Feria" depicted acrobats, jugglers and other performers in typical town fairs.

As novelist **Henry James** noted, "There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony of afternoon tea."

INGRID Holm and pals Vicky Herrera and Eric Cua, with his love, adorable Michelle Pamintuan

BEST of pals: Shu Uemura's Tina Tinio and Carissa Oledan Coscolluela

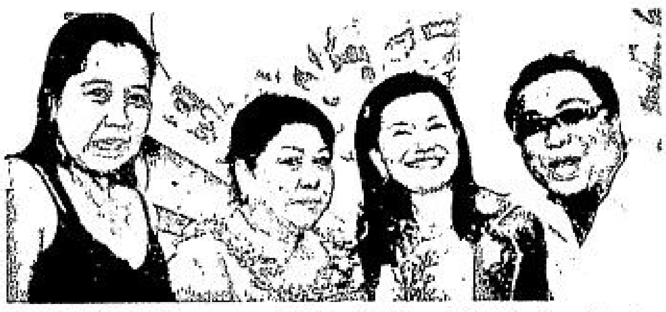
TESSA Dragon and Cristina Garcia

DESIGNER Mich Dulce and Shu Uemura's Gigi Gonzalez-Uson

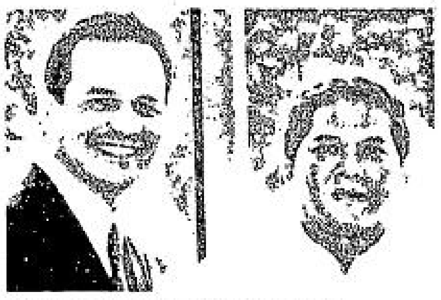
ALESSANDRA Tinio, flanked by Claire Seelin-Diokno and Xeng Zulueta

BUSINESSMAN Boy Tinio and wife, fashion plate Mary Ann Cuenca T.

GEM Misa, L'Opera's sultry beauty Abba Nappa, Mai-Mai Limon and Jill Gerodia


THE POPULAR Guava resto's Cristy Castillo, with Nelia Dee, Sandra Fernandez and Gari Palmani

PHOEMELA Barranda, Benjie Angeles and Jane Kingsu


MAKATI Shangri-La's hotshot vice president/general manager, tres *charmant* Philippe Caretti; and artist and food connoisseur Claude Tayag

LOBBY Lounge's Marissa Dumangan, with aunts Lydia and Nene Limson, who shared Pampangueño recipes for the Filipino Tea

TWO generations of Tayags: "Imang During" and Doren

TEA lovers Robert Lilles and wife Cecile

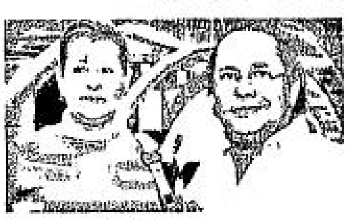
GLENDA Barretto

TESSA Prieto Valdes and Jeremy Aniere

THE POWER BUNCH: Oscar Salvacion; Angie Lacson, head of Ayala Land Premiere; Anabelle Wisniewski, EVP and group head; Miriam Katigbak of Ayala Malls Group; and Lilit Tumbocon, EVP of Ayala Land Inc.

NAIL Tropics' Gigi Daza, Dr. Leonardo Mangubat and Rose Jordan

CACAO'S Ricky and Bubu Andres


ALEXANDRA and Francisco Cacho of Gaudi, one of the top Spanish restos

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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THE DAWN front man Jett Pangan believes in the goal. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'Stop the Killings'

Bar tour with a cause kicks off at '70s Bistro

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

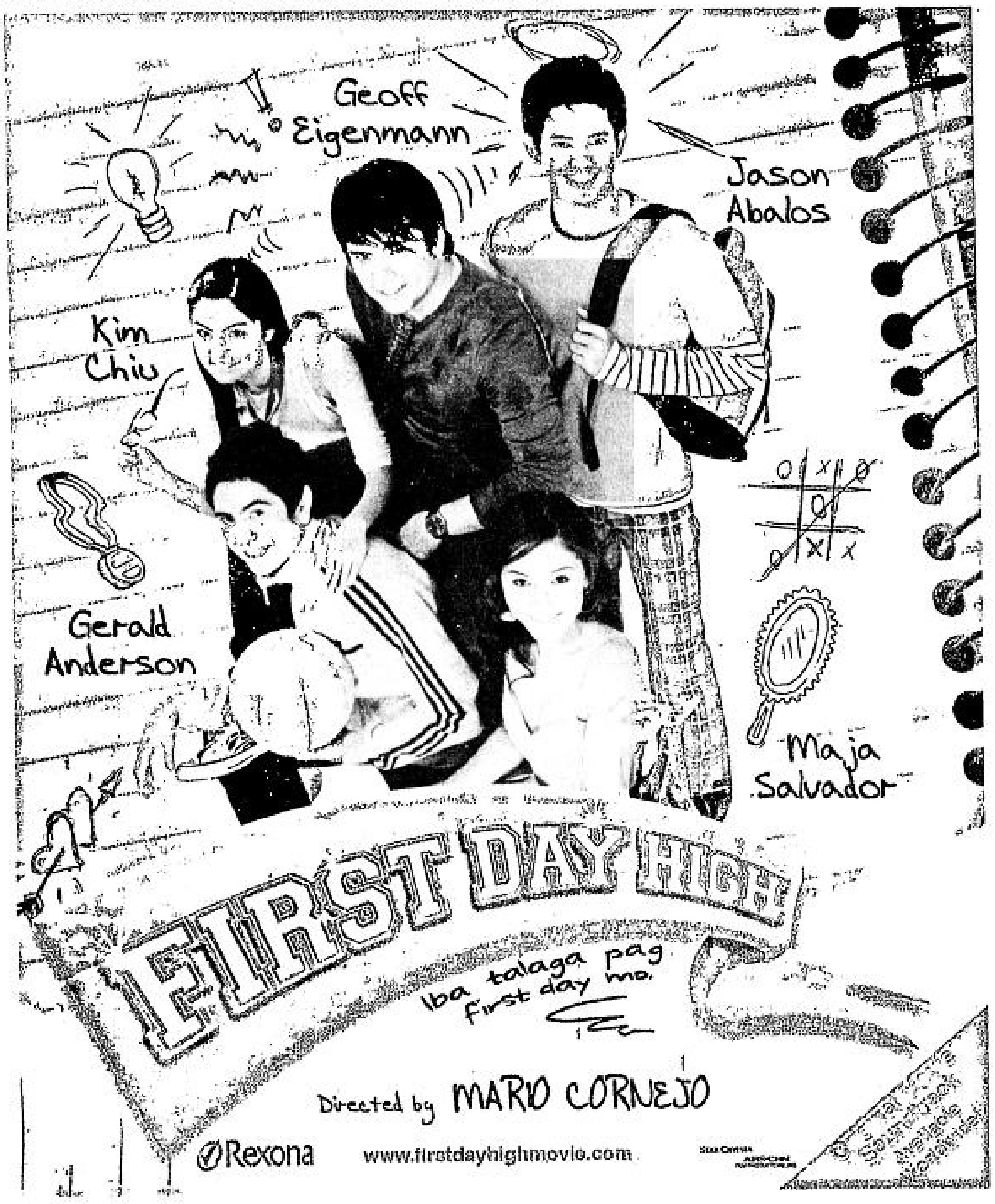
THURSDAY NIGHT, the '70s Bistro was bursting at the seams.

The size of the crowd—composed of young and old office professionals as well as their sons and daughters, social workers, students, artists, musicians and, most especially, media people—was almost double the club's capacity. Everyone had come to express solidarity with the gig's theme, "Stop the Killings."

It was organized by a group of Bistro habitués led by INQUIRER columnist Conrado de Quiros. Someone recalled that while De Quiros was talking about the recent death of three members of the ABC 5 TV crew in a road mishap, the conversation shifted to another kind of violent death—the kind suffered by journalists and activists.

But rather than stage a protest through the usual rallies, the Bistro group agreed

'STOP'/ D2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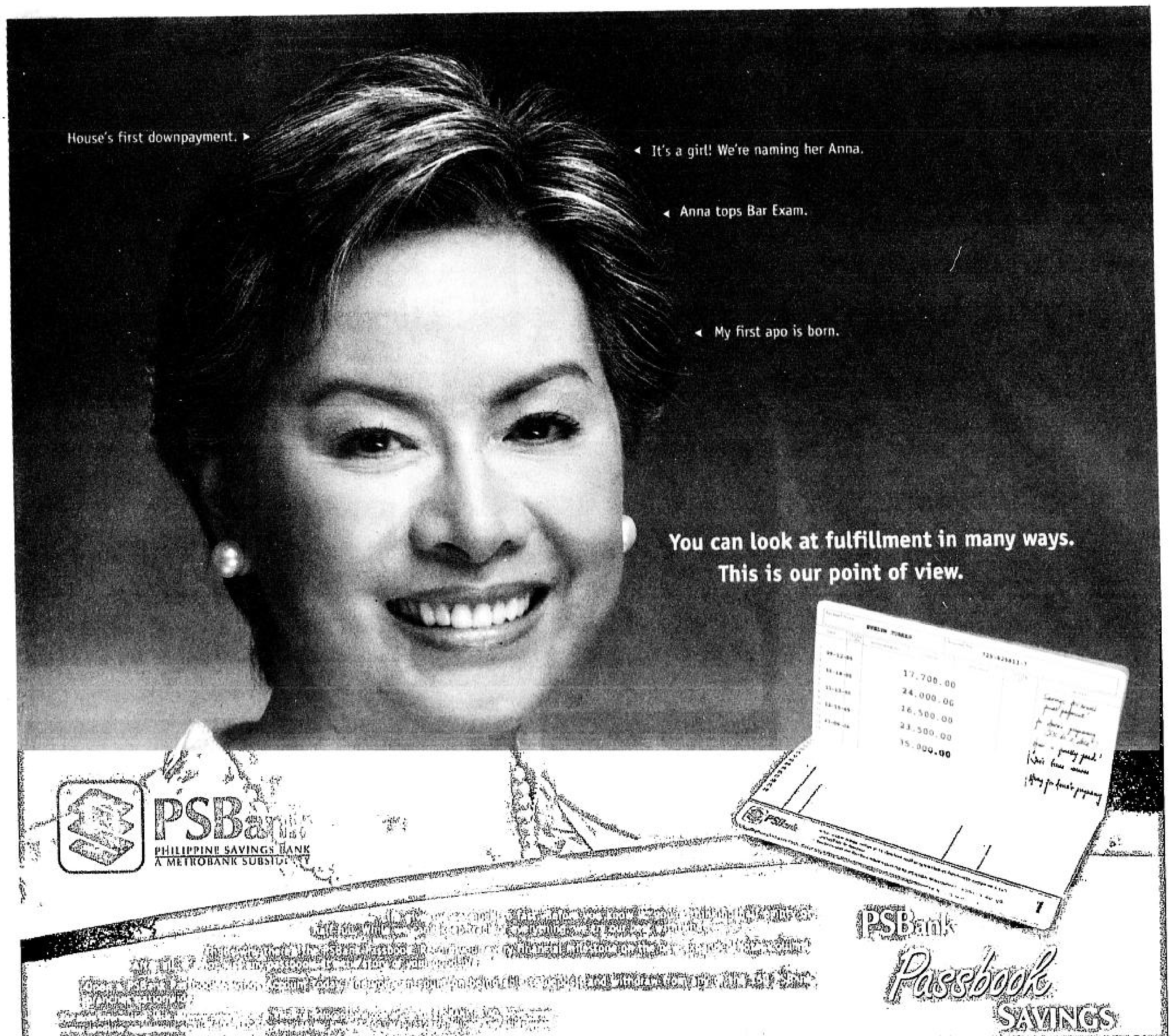
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When bondage gets in the way of bonding

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

KAI PALOMANES, THE MOM of **Jericho Rosales'** love child **Santino**, wants to clarify that there's no truth to the rumor that she's suing Echo. "We are just trying to iron matters regarding the birth certificate of Saint. We are trying to have it as Palomares-Rosales instead of just Rosales if permissible by law."

That's just a technicality. What Kai is really fighting for is her son's wish to have quality time with his dad. "Saint and I haven't seen Echo for three months now. All our son wants is to spend time alone with his dad without **Heart** (**Evangelista**). He is in a stage wherein he wants my undivided attention and Echo's, too. We don't have an open communication as of now so I asked the help of a lawyer. Visitation rights has never been a problem. Echo is welcome to see Saint anytime. For now, Saint requests *sila lang ng* dad *niya mag*-bonding minus Heart. The same thing goes for me. Saint doesn't want to see my lover, too. I hope Echo and I can do it for our son."

Kai stressed that she has nothing against Heart. "I am even thankful that she accepted Saint. I just hope she will respect my son's wish to see his dad without her around." It's really hard when bondage to a significant other gets in the way of bonding with your own flesh and blood.

Ayayay Iya

"TV Patrol" picked up my item about **Iya Villania** kissing a network bigwig. Iya sounded irked. I respect that. But why the sarcastic remarks and defensive tone? Didn't she read the extro in that column item of mine which said, "Could it be just a case of mistaken identity?"

Whatever way she looks at it, that's still publicity for her. Too bad she took it the wrong way. She even went to the extent of saying that I might have something personal against her. How preposterous! I remember the time when Iya and I still had TV shows on IBC 13. We bumped into each other a lot and even had the same make-up artist (Weng). She was so warm and friendly. Sad to say, I couldn't see traces of the Iya I used to know in the "TV Patrol" interview.

In my previous column, I clarified that the GF of the network executive just happens to look like her. But no word from Iya anymore. Show biz has enough celebrities like her who harp about a teeny-weeny "pitik" but who don't know how to appreciate the mere mention of their name by writers. What a waste of precious column space!

Ooh la la Ruffa

Solar Entertainment is proud to bring "America's Next Top Model" newest international version: "Philippines' Next Top Model." Nobody can host the show better than **Ruffa Gutierrez**. She can still give ramp models a run for their money even after having two kids.

"This show came at the right time. I have the blessings of **Ylmaz** (**Bektas**). I will shuttle back and forth from Turkey. I think it's important for a woman to have her own world. Why give up your dreams just because you're married already?"

She's raring to do the show. "I'm excited to model the creations of our young talented local designers. Even when I'm not on TV, I make it a point *na nakaporma pa rin ako*. In Turkey, I wear boots even to the market (laughs)!" Whether in the market as a wife/mom or in the studio as a host/actress, Ruffa has maintained her market value.

'Now & Forever' 7

GMA 7 takes viewers to a different level of intense drama with a touching story of love, envy, rage and redemption of honor as "Now & Forever" (Season 7) presents 'Dangal' (after "Pinakamamahal" in Dramarama sa Hapon), top-billed by **Jennylyn Mercado** and **Dennis Trillo**. It's **Cherie Gil's** first project in the Kapuso network. Her bothers **Michael de Mesa** and **Mark Gil** are also with GMA now. The Gils are alive with the sound of applause for their superb acting. As for the lead stars Jen and Dennis, will they fall for each other not just in the TV series? Why not? If they want it badly enough to happen, it will.

Gridiron

National Press Club's traditional Gridiron will be held on Sept. 27, Wednesday, at the Manila Hotel. This year's presentation is entitled "Pinoy Big Problem at the Palace." Directed by Bart Guingona, the show has for its cast members of the NPC and media personalities. President Arroyo has confirmed her attendance. For tickets, call 3010521 or 3010522.

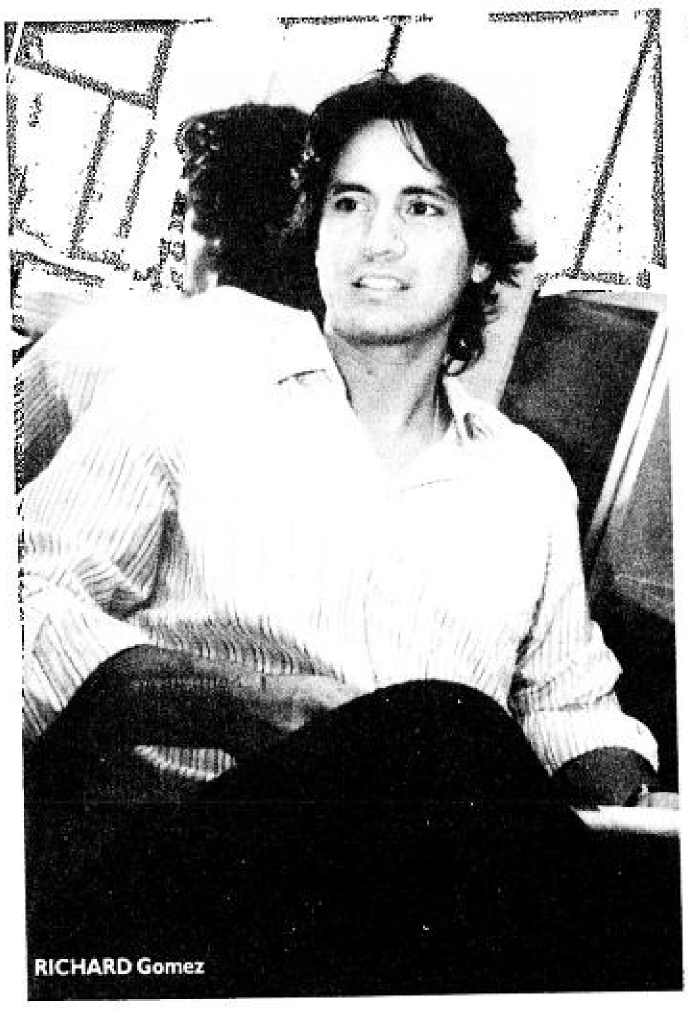
Merk's turns 4

Prince of Jazz Richard Merk is ecstatic that his Merk's Bar & Bistro is celebrating its fourth anniversary on Sept. 27 with an open house. Over and above their unique cuisine and varied live entertainment, it's Richard and his wife Roni's fund-raising concerts (for their colleagues in need) that make Merk's a real haven.

Personal: *Merci Beaucoup* to all my friends, ex-es and colleagues who remembered my birthday. I celebrate my *vida loca (luka-luka!)* with your friendship. I look back and look ahead smiling because of all of you. Special thanks to J.Y. for making me the happiest birthday girl on earth.

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

JERICHO'S son misses him.
ROMY HOMILLADA



RICHARD Gomez

Goma learned a lot —flipping burgers

By Joe Mari de Jesus
Contributor

APOLOGIZING ON NATIONAL television to a close friend he reportedly offended has earned TV talk show host-actor Richard Gomez more *pogi* points than he could ever imagine.

But amid all the intrigues and stress-inducing incidents that come with his profession, Richard has proven that he has matured really well.

This he credits to the "humble" years he spent as crew member for McDonald's, his first employer. It was in the food chain, he said, that he learned the value of hard work, camaraderie and discipline.

"I worked there for more than a year, fresh from high school. My friends and I were initially looking for a summer job but I enjoyed it, *tumagal nang tumagal. Iba 'yung samahan eh*," he said.

That was in 1983. McDonald's was only two years old in the country and had four outlets—Greenhills, Morayta, Cubao and Makati, right beside what was then called Quad Cinemas, now part of Glorietta mall.

"I was living with my grandmother in Makati so that was the nearest branch. I remember there were fewer buildings in that area at the time," Richard said.

Now, as the food chain celebrates its 25th year anniversary, Richard still remembers the terms used by crew members for each task assigned.

"I was part of the group on morning shift called the openers," he said. "We opened the store at 8 and we had to be there at 7. My first assignment was the counter but I also worked the other stations."

Being an efficient crew member, he was occasionally assigned to other stores. He was among the first to go to the Greenhills or Morayta branch if they needed extra crew.

"We had two rules to follow," he recalled. "First, clean as you go. It meant keep your work station clean at all times. Second, first-in-first-out, which meant the first product cooked should be the first product served."

Richard said it was all about discipline—being on time, working fast, being efficient, never wasting a moment, or the tasks would pile up. Thus he learned the value of teamwork, of camaraderie.

All these traits he carried into show business when he was discovered by Douglas Quijano and W Talent Management.

Despite the nastiest intrigues, he remains the ideal father to Juliana and husband to Lucy. With them, he remains, so to speak, rooted to his past.

The actor said some of his fellow crew members at the food chain's Makati branch are still in touch with him. "We are friends up to now. Two of them I still see regularly. They are successful businessmen already."

People behind McDonald's were well aware of Gomez's stint with them. When he became a show biz heartthrob, they got him for a TV commercial. It had a touching scene that hit the target market in the heart. Speaking to a crew member manning the counter, Gomez's line was, simply, "I used to work here."

'Stop the Killings'

From page D1

nothing could be more powerful—at least vocally—than music.

When the closely-knit rock 'n' roll community at the Bistro was told about this, the response was positively supportive. And so many bands wanted to play, so the idea of a bar tour was hatched.

Thursday's gig was the kickoff leg.

Gary Granada needed no backup, opening the show with his customary humor and wit. He jested: "*Madalas ang* meeting *ng* organizers, *e libre pagkain*, so *sumali ako...*"

After running through jazzed up versions of "Kahit Konti," "Barangay Ginebra" and "Bahay," the prolific singer-songwriter began playing a tune whose lyrics would serve as a friendly reminder to the Melo Commission: "*Paano mahuhuli.../Kung ang manghuhuli at hinuhuli/Ay magkakampi...*"

Really a celebration

Not everything heard that night alluded to alleged military atrocities and human rights violations. The underlying intent, after all, was to counter the culture of death and violence by celebrating the joy of life through live music.

Moments before the Dawn played a five-song set, vocalist Jett Pangan said, "Wow, *parang* '80s, 9 p.m. *pa lang ang dami na'ng tao.*" It should be remembered that Teddy Diaz, the band's founding guitarist and moving force, was himself a victim of violence, having been stabbed to death by a crazed lowlife. Though inactive for sometime, it was heartening to see two of the surviving original members (Pangan and drummer JB Leonor) spring back to life and play old and new material with Diaz's able replacement, Francis Reyes, and the latest recruit, bassist Buddy Zabala.

The Jerks, a band that has been around longer than the Dawn, sounded fresh and invigorating as though Chickoy Pura and Nitoy Adriano, two founding members, had never gained weight or suffered failing eyesight.

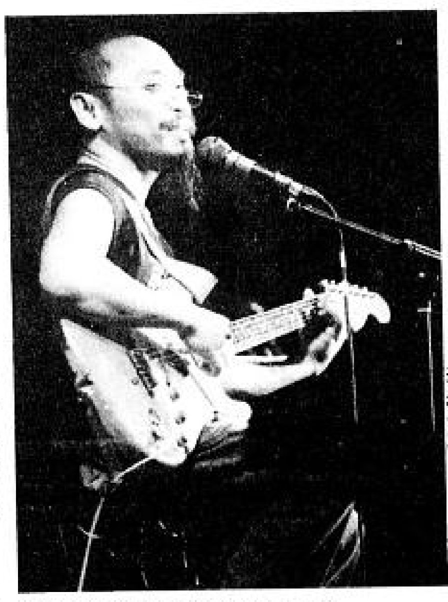
The rest of the performers—from Sandwich to Sugarfree to Radioactive Sago Project to Brownman Revival— kept the audience glued to their cramped spaces. Not a few broke into dance, singing along with familiar refrains, or laughing out loud from a stinging lyric.

It was amusing to watch Color It Red's Cooky Chua acting as a production assistant, every now and then reminding the next band, "*O, kayo na susunod ha...*"

What's next? The plan is to keep the bar tour running around the city and maybe even in schools, and hopefully have it culminate in a grand gig sometime in December.

"*Sana* December 10," said one of the organizers. "Human Rights Day."

Better yet, only when the killings stop.



PHOTOS BY JM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GARY Granada: "Libre pagkain, e."

RAIMUND Marasigan and Sandwich

SUGARFREE

BROWNMAN Revival

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THE DAWN

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1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

2 TWILIGHT DANCERS
12.00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 STEP UP
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

4 DEAD OR ALIVE
1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00

5 THE BREED
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

6 TALLADEGA NIGHTS Sneak Preview
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

7 MAXIMO OLIVEROS 12:50 3:05 5:20
THE WICKER MAN 7:55 10:00

8 YOU ARE THE ONE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

9 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
12:30 2:55 5:20 7:45 10:00

10 CRANK
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 DEAD OR ALIVE 11:45 1:45 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00

2 TWILIGHT DANCERS
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50

3 STEP UP
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 MAXIMO OLIVEROS 12:00 1:50 3:40
CRANK 5:50 7:50 9:50

5 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE 12:00 1:50 3:40
SCOOP 5:50 7:50 10:00

6 THE BREED
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

7 TALLADEGA NIGHTS
Sneak Preview

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 CRANK
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:55 9:00

2 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

3 THE BREED
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00

4 STEP UP
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

5 RESERVE

6 TWILIGHT DANCERS
1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

7 DEAD OR ALIVE
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

8 YOU ARE THE ONE

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1 TWILIGHT DANCERS
2 YOU ARE THE ONE
3 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
4 DEAD OR ALIVE

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2 THE WICKER MAN
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4 CRANK

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3 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
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8 CRANK
9 SNAKES ON A PLANE
10 WICKER MAN
11 YOU ARE THE ONE
12 THE BREED

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1 TALLADEGA NIGHTS
2 CRANK
3 PHILIPPINE IDOL
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5 THE BREED
6 STEP UP
7 PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
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9 YOU ARE THE ONE
10 DEAD OR ALIVE
11 SNAKES ON A PLANE
12 WICKER MAN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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2 ETERNITY
3 SNAKES ON A PLANE
4 WICKER MAN
THE BREED
5 CRANK
DEAD OR ALIVE
STEP UP
YOU ARE THE ONE
LITTLE MAN
JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
12 MONSTER HOUSE

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 DEAD OR ALIVE
2 STEP UP
THE BREED
4 CRANK
YOU ARE THE ONE
MONSTER HOUSE
JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
8 ETERNITY
9 WICKER MAN
SNAKES ON A PLANE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
STEP UP
4 THE BREED
5 PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
6 YOU ARE THE ONE

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2 STEP UP
3 THE BREED
4 DEAD OR ALIVE
5 CRANK
6 PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
7 SNAKES ON A PLANE
8 YOU ARE THE ONE
9 MONSTER HOUSE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
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2 YOU ARE THE ONE
3 CRANK
4 THE BREED

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1 SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 CRANK
3 STEP UP
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5 MONSTER HOUSE
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12 THE BREED

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JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
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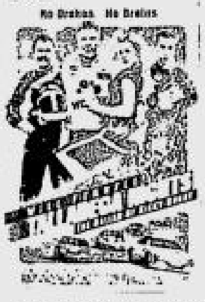

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2 SNAKES A ON PLANE
3 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
4 CRANK
5 YOU ARE THE ONE
6 STAY ALIVE

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LUZON

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1 SNAKES A ON PLANE
2 KUBRADOR
3 CRANK
4 YOU ARE THE ONE

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
3 SNAKES A ON PLANE
4 CRANK
5 SCOOP
6 YOU, ME AND DUPREE

SM CITY LIPA
1 CRANK
2 SNAKES ON A PLANE
3 YOU ARE THE ONE
4 MONSTER HOUSE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
YOU ARE THE ONE
2 MORTUARY
3 AMERICAN DREAMZ
4 MONSTER HOUSE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197836-39
1 CRANK
2 LOVEWRECKED
3 MORTUARY
4 YOU,ME AND DUPREE

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
DEAD OR ALIVE
2 THE BREED
3 YOU ARE THE ONE
4 WICKER MAN

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341285-86
CRANK/ YOU ARE THE ONE
2 WICKER MAN
3 SNAKES ON A PLANE
4 DEVIL WEARS PRADA

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
2 DEAD OR ALIVE
3 CRANK
4 WICKER MAN
5 PENGUIN, PENGUIN
6 STORMBREAKER
7 YOU ARE THE ONE
8 SNAKES ON A PLANE

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 RESERVED
3 MY SUPER X-GIRLFRIEND
4 YOU ARE THE ONE
5 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
6 BINIBINING K
7 RESERVED
8 YOU, ME AND DUPREE

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 DEVIL WEARS PRADA
2 YOU ARE THE ONE
3 YOU, ME AND DUPREE
4 STAY ALIVE
5 BINIBINING K
6 SNAKES ON A PLANE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (058)859-2884
1 SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 MONSTER HOUSE
3 YOU ARE THE ONE
4 YOU, ME AND DUPREE

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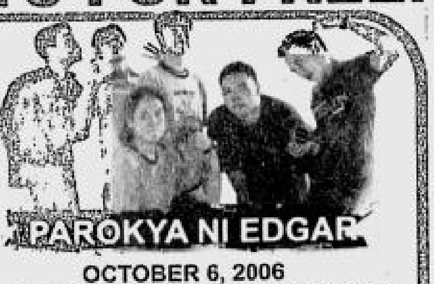

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ROUNDUP

Dengue on 'Probe'

THIS WEEK "PROBE" reports the dengue outbreak in parts of Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan and other cities nationwide.

It debunks misconceptions about the disease and affirms that prevention is definitely better than cure.

The show also follows 10 Aetas from Floridablanca, Pampanga who will go down in history as "the first Aeta Overseas Skilled Workers."

For 40 days, this batch of Aetas endured being away from family, and without radio or TV to train inside the Clark Polytechnic Institute to learn the basics of Tungsten Inert Gas Welding, a special method of welding metals.

The episode airs on Sept. 27 at 11 p.m.

'Rollergirls'

'Rollergirls' is the rollicking, real-action show that puts viewers on the fast track of the Austin Thunderdome.

The five-team, all-girl league of tough and sexy young atheletes pay to skate and play to win.

Every non-scripted episode follows the women as they square off against each other on the track and then face everyday challenges with boyfriends and bosses off-track.

The show airs on Channel V tomorrow at 2 p.m., Sept. 27 at 4 p.m. and Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.

'Grey's' vs 'CSI'

LOS ANGELES—ABC's upstart hospital hit

"Grey's Anatomy" performed a ratings transplant on the CBS powerhouse crime show "CSI" on Thursday as two of television's hottest dramas went head to head for the first time.

The season premiere of "Grey's Anatomy," a newcomer to the Thursday schedule, topped the night with 25.4 million viewers overall—three million more than "CSI"—and scored the No. 1 rating among adults aged 18 to 49, the group most prized by advertisers, Nielsen Media Research reported on Friday. *Reuters*

South Park Season 10

LOS ANGELES — Talk about a star-studded arrivals line. There they were: Tom Cruise, Jennifer Lopez, Steven Spielberg and Paris Hilton. Mel Gibson even showed up.

But this was the launch party for the 10th season of "South Park" and the celebrities were cardboard cut-outs.

No matter, the smiling caricatures still loomed large along the red carpet at the Thursday-night affair to celebrate the controversial Emmy—winning animated Comedy Central series. The program first aired Aug. 13, 1997, and begins its new season Oct. 4. *AP*

Audioslave's 'Revelations'

Critics describe "Revelations," Audioslave's third album, as the funkiest ever produced by the band.

"Revelations" presents a more overtly politic Audioslave, particularly via the song "Wide Awake," a scathing condemnation of the Bush administration.

The CD album, released under Sony BMG Music Entertainment, is now on sale in leading record stores. The first few hundreds to purchase copies from Tower Records and Music One outlets will get free Audioslave t-shirts and lighters.

Audioslave is composed of singer Chris Cornell, guitarist Tom Morello, bassist Tim Commerford and drummer Brad Wilk.

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JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE 3:00 / 7:20
YOU ARE THE ONE 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30
CRANK 2:30 / 6:50
SCOOP 12:20 / 4:40 / 9:00
TWILIGHT DANCERS 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 12:30 / 2:50 / 5:10 / 7:30 / 9:50
SNEAK PREVIEW : TALLADEGA NIGHTS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
STEP UP 1:10 / 3:45 / 6:20 / 8:55

Ali MALL 5

YOU ARE THE ONE 12:40 / 3:10 / 5:40 / 8:10
TWILIGHT DANCERS 12:00 R4 / 1:10 / 3:30 / 5:50 / 8:10
THE BREED 1:35 / 4:00 / 6:25 / 8:50
THE WICKER MAN 12:00 R2 / 1:50 / 4:00 / 6:10 / 8:20
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Cinema	No.	Film
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	TWILIGHT DANCERS
	2	THE BREED
	3	YOU ARE THE ONE
	4	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	TALLADEGA NIGHTS
	2	JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
	3 THX	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	KINKY BOOTS
	5	YOU, ME & DUPREE
	6	STEP-UP
	7	THE BREED
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
	2	STEP-UP
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	STEP-UP 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	SCOOP 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	KINKY BOOTS 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10, 11:10 GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE 12:10, 2:15, 4:20, 6:25, 8:30, 10:40 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2	STEP-UP
	3	JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE
	4	THE BREED
	5	SCOOP
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
	2	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE
	3	THE WICKER MAN
	4	CRANK
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1	STEP-UP
	2	TWILIGHT DANCERS
	3	THE BREED
	4	YOU ARE THE ONE
	5	DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE

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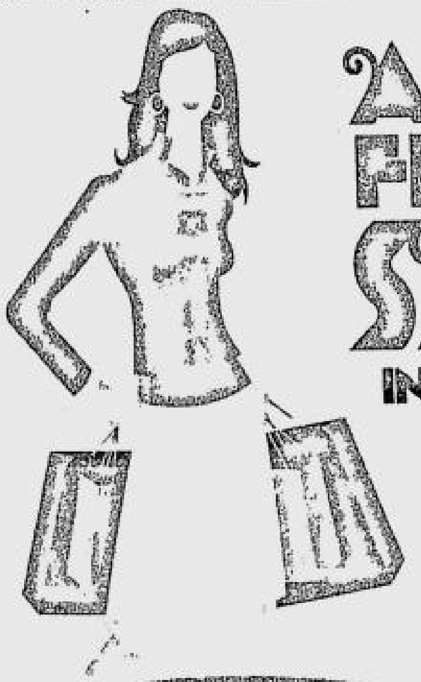

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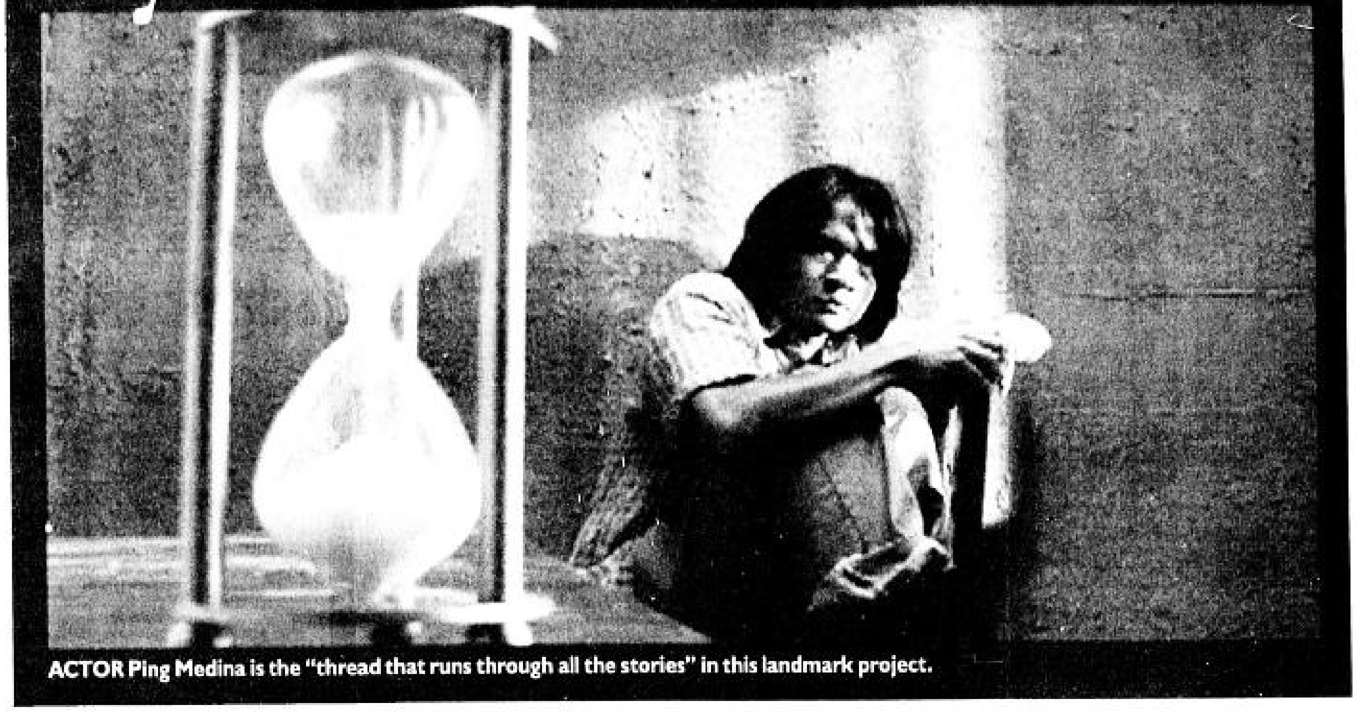
'Imahe Nasyon' made by 20 indie filmmakers

By Marinel R. Cruz



ACTOR Ping Medina is the "thread that runs through all the stories" in this landmark project.

THE PRODUCERS of "Imahe Nasyon," an omnibus film featuring works of 20 independent filmmakers, are looking into the possibility of having the movie screened in schools all over the country, said the producer Jon Red.

"Imahe Nasyon," produced by Digital Viva and Peli Pula, premiered at the Robinsons Galleria digital theater on Friday night.

"We intend for 'Imahe Nasyon' to have a regular run in theaters. We also plan to have a school tour, hopefully with some of the 20 filmmakers present to interact with the students," Red, also a filmmaker, told INQUIRER Entertainment before the premiere.

"Imahe Nasyon" was conceptualized to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the People Power revolt on Edsa, and "celebrate the struggle and growth of Philippine independent cinema for the past 20 years," said Red.

The participating filmmakers are: Lav Diaz ("Nang Matapos Ang Ulan"), Raymond Red ("Mistulang Kamera Obskura") Roxlee ("La Pula"), Neil Daza ("Biyaheng Edsa") Ellen Ramos ("Speci Men"), Robert Quebral ("Barado"), Paolo Villaluna, ("One Shot") Mes De Guzman ("Tsinelas"), Topel Lee ("Ang Manunulat"), Emmanuel dela Cruz ("Imagining Edsa");

RUDY ESPERAS

JON RED: "It's not a new idea, just the first one that pulled through."

Lyle Sacris ("Dibuho") Milo Alto Paz ("Lugaw"), RA Rivera ("Public Service Announcement"), Sigfreid Barros-Sanchez ("Aksyon Star"), Tad Ermitaño ("Local Unit"), Ogi Sugatan ("5 Minutes"), Poklong Anading ("Between Intersection"), EJ Salcedo ("Talahib"), Dennis Empalmado ("Bwahaha") and Yeye Calderon ("Silid")

The two-hour film is the first major project of the newly formed Independent Filmmakers Cooperative (IFC). Last month, the IFC, in cooperation with ABC 5, spearheaded the trip of 15 filmmakers to Guimaras Island to shoot a 10-minute short film each about the oil spill in Western Visayas. The project, called "Bulig Guimaras" will commemorate in a three-day festival at the Robinson's Galleria from Oct. 13-16.

What's the inspiration behind this omnibus film?

It was conceptualized one day in January while my wife, Carol, and I were thinking about what project to do next. We realized that our eldest will be 20 years old soon and that the People Power in Edsa is celebrating its 20th anniversary, too. Along that line, we also thought that the events in indie filmmaking for the past 20 years were crucial to its development.

We thought, "Why not make a project to commemorate these events?" That same afternoon, I found myself talking with my brother Raymond (Cannes winner for his short film, "Anino") and Lav Diaz who both agreed to participate in the project. By 4 p.m., I was speaking with Vincent del Rosario of Digital Viva, pitching the idea. He told me to formalize the project by putting it on paper.

This idea is not entirely new. There were others who thought of doing this before. The only difference is that "Imahe Nasyon" pulled through. Firstly, because there's a producer brave enough to finance it. Second, there were 20 directors who committed to the project.

How did you pick the participating filmmakers?

The first list of directors numbered 100. To be honest, we wanted to get them all, but we had to be practical. We narrowed them down to 20. Carol and I weren't thinking as producers when we chose who to include. We thought like how the members of the audience would think. We know we don't have to justify this. Let's just say these are the filmmakers whose works we want to see on screen. There'll be more opportunities for the others.

Were there guidelines that the directors followed?

A "love letter" was how we called the memo we sent the filmmakers that contained these questions: *Ano ang pananaw mo sa nangyari nitong nakaraang 20 taon? Ma*-drama *ba? Komedi?* Sex film *ba? Kahit ano pwede kasi iba-iba naman tayo.*

What we wanted was for the directors to come up with something personal. We didn't want textbook answers. Every opinion or vision was valid.

MEDINA in another incarnation within the same movie.

Ideally, we decided each short film should only last for three to five minutes, but some were as long as eight minutes. That's not so bad. The film's total running time is still two hours.

How much money was allotted for the entire film?

Digital Viva financed the project for less than a million. A filmmaker was given only P20,000. This was because we still had to spend for processing, production, promotion and similar concerns.

Why is actor Ping Medina in all of the stories?

Ping is the thread that binds all the stories. Initially, he was supposed to perform only one character, but he later assumed multiple roles. All these roles depict the struggles of a 20-year-old youth.

Ping is the fastest-rising indie actor now. We want him to represent the face of the youth today. We know working with 20 different directors is a riot. They needed a common denominator.

What can viewers expect from the film?

"Imahe Nasyon" is not an easy film to watch. Here, we shall see the personal vision of each filmmaker.

Since we gave guide questions to the 20 filmmakers, we might expect these questions to be answered here. But after seeing the film in its entirety, I personally think the viewers will have more questions. I think this is a good thing. Having more questions don't mean we learned nothing. This will simply encourage us to discuss the topic further. *Ganyan dapat para maging progresibo tayo.* We in alternative or indie filmmaking believe that viewers should not just be spoon-fed. There should be participation.

Is this the first of many similar projects or a one-time deal?

Many wanted to participate. Some are already asking about "Imahe Nasyon 2." This is really hard work. It's hard to deal with different moods, attitudes, disciplines of filmmakers. But I'm not complaining; the hardship is part of it all. We just need to rest first. We want "Imahe Nasyon" to be seen by as many people as possible.

Talking-veggies cartoon sparks religious conflict

LOS ANGELES—BOB THE Tomato and Larry the Cucumber always had a moral message in their long-running "VeggieTales" series, a collection of animated home videos for children that encourage moral behavior based on Christian principles. But now that the vegetable stars have hit network television, they cannot speak as freely as they once did, and that has got the Parents Television Council steamed.

Inanity

The conservative media-watchdog group issued a statement Wednesday blasting NBC, which airs "VeggieTales," for editing out some references to God from the children's animated show.

"What struck me and continues to strike me is the inanity of ripping the heart and soul out of a successful product and not thinking that there will be consequences to it," said L. Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council. "The series is successful because of its biblical world view, not in spite of it."

More than 50 million copies of the series have been sold since 1993, according to Big Idea Inc., which produces the series. Two weeks ago, NBC began airing 30-minute episodes on Saturday mornings—but edited to comply with the network's broadcast standards, said NBC spokesperson Rebecca Marks.

"We aim to reach as broad an audience as possible with these positive messages while being careful not to advocate any one religious point of view," she said.

"VeggieTales" creator Phil Vischer, who was responsible for readying episodes for network broadcast, said he didn't know until just weeks before the shows were to begin airing that nonhistorical references to God and the Bible would have to be removed.

Had he known how much he would have to change the show—including Bob and Larry's tagline, "Remember kids, God made you special and he loves you very much," that concludes each episode—Vischer said he would not have signed on for the network deal.

"I would have declined partly because I knew a lot of fans would feel like it was a sellout," he said, adding that "there weren't enough shows that could work well without those (religious) references."

All programs set to air on NBC must meet the network's broadcast standards, said Alan Wurtzel, a broadcast standards exec. "VeggieTales" was treated the same as any other program, he said.

"There's a fine line of universally accepted religious values," he said. "We don't get too specific with any particular religious doctrine or any particular religious denomination."

Cool

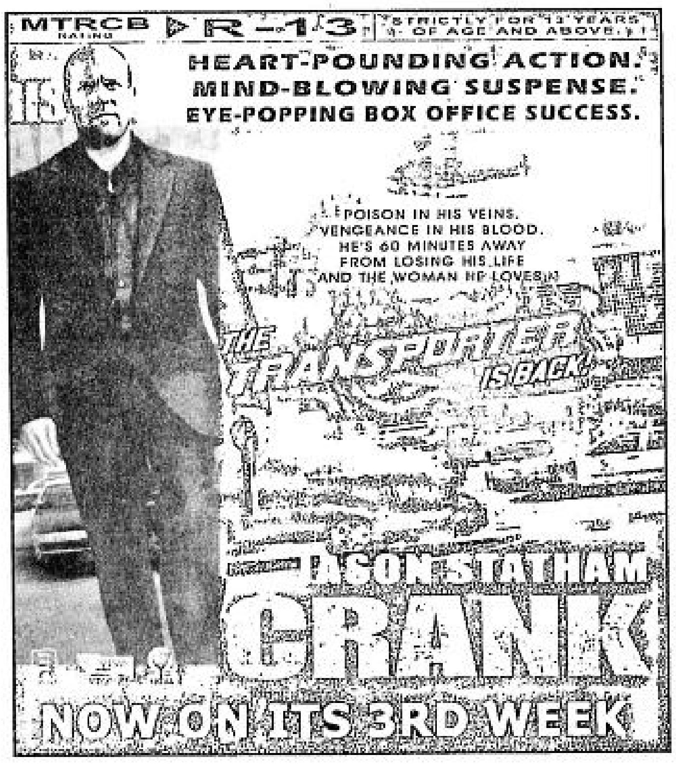
Vischer said he understands the network's position.

"'VeggieTales' is religious, NBC is not," he said. "I want to focus people more on 'Isn't it cool that Bob and Larry are on television?'"

Marks said the network is "committed to the positive messages and universal values" of the show and expects "VeggieTales" to continue airing.

But Bozell is not satisfied.

"If NBC is so concerned about that four-letter-word God, then they shouldn't have taken 'VeggieTales'," he said. "This just documents the disconnect between Hollywood and the real world." *Sandy Cohen, AP*



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3 DEAD OR ALIVE MTRCB PG-13 1 05, 3.15, 5.30, 7 45, 10:00

4 MONSTER HOUSE MTRCB GP 1 20, 3 20 SCOOP MTRCB PG-13 5 20, 7 40, 10 00

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CINEMA 4 STEP UP 12:00, 2:40, 5:15 7:50, 10:30 PG13

CINEMA 5 TALLADEGA NIGHTS 11:00, 1:15, 3:30 5:45, 8:00, 10:15 R-13

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OCT. 07, 2006	AKAFELLAS	8:30 PM
OCT. 13, 2006	[illegible]	8:00 PM

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1 JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE 1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 11:00 PG-13

2 STEP UP 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13

3 TALLADEGA NIGHTS 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:10 R-13

4 DEAD OR ALIVE 11:50, 2:00, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 11:00 PG-13

Lou Diamond Phillips faces 1 year in jail

LOS ANGELES—ACTOR LOU DIAMOND PHILLIPS, BEST KNOWN for his role as rocker Ritchie Valens in the movie "La Bamba," has been charged with domestic battery in a fight with his girlfriend, officials said last weekend.

Phillips faces up to one year in jail and a $2,000 fine if convicted of the misdemeanor count, which was filed on Thursday in Los Angeles. His arraignment is set for Oct. 18.

In an August dispute, Phillips is alleged to have "pushed and dragged (his girlfriend) across the house, resulting in scrapes to both knees," City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo said in a statement.

The woman locked herself in a bathroom and called 911 for help. *Reuters*

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JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE **PG13** 1:50,3:50,5:50,7:50,9:50	**TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY** **R13** 1:00,3:15,5:30,7:45,10:00	**DOA: DEAD OR ALIVE** **PG13** 2:10,4:10,6:10,8:10,10:10
THE BREED **R13** 2:20,4:20,6:20,8:20	**CRANK** **R13** 1:30,3:30,5:30,7:30	**STEP UP** **PG13** 1:25,3:40,5:55,8:10,10:25

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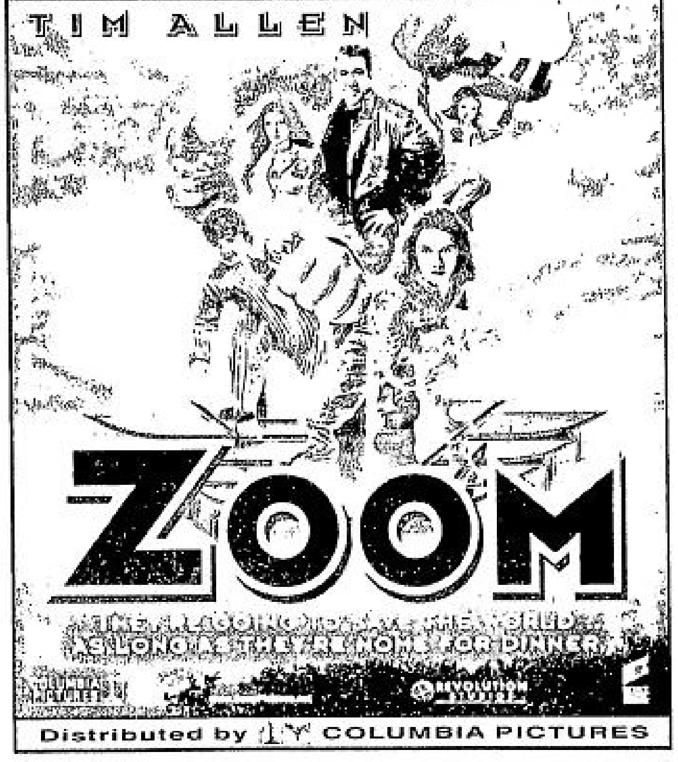
MTRCB G | ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED

THE FAMILY ADVENTURE OF THE SEASON!



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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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1 CRANK
2 AMERICAN DREAM

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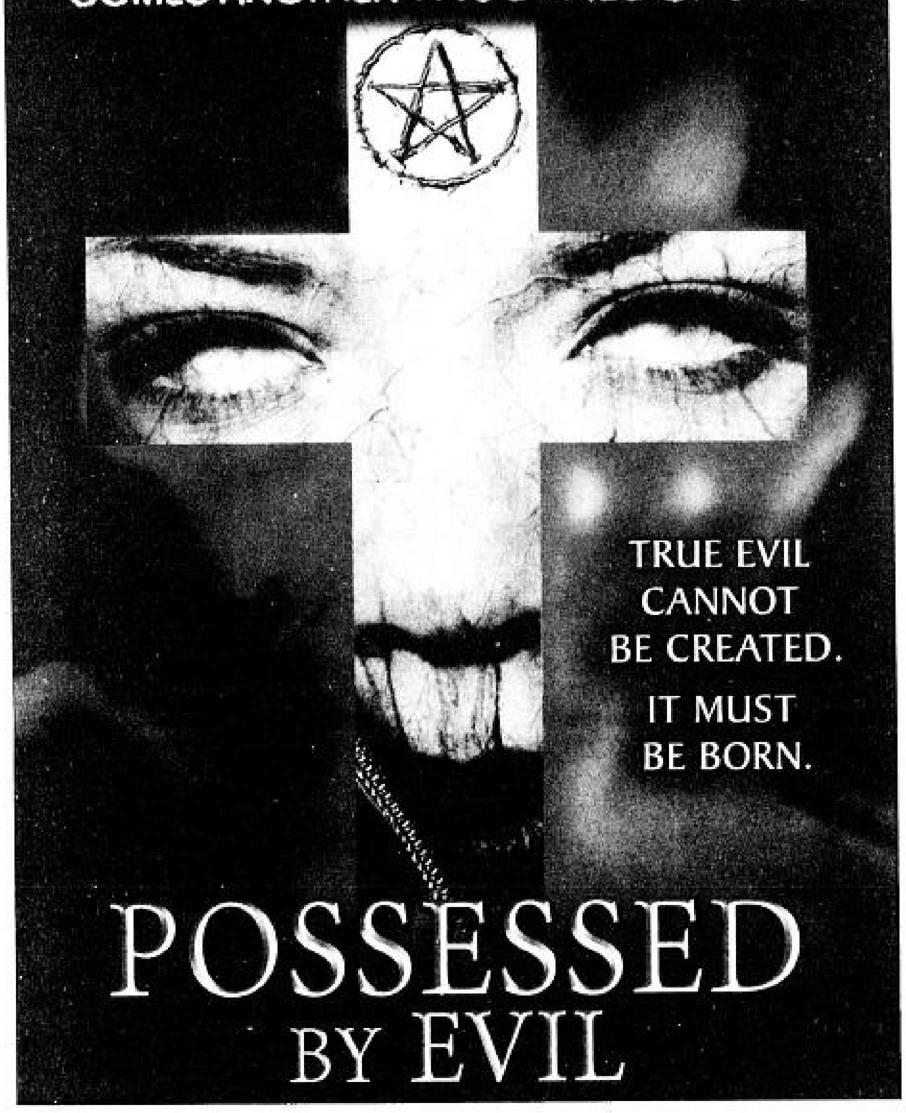
IN THE TRADITION OF 'THE EXORCIST' COMES ANOTHER TRUE TALE OF EVIL


TRUE EVIL CANNOT BE CREATED.
IT MUST BE BORN.
POSSESSED BY EVIL

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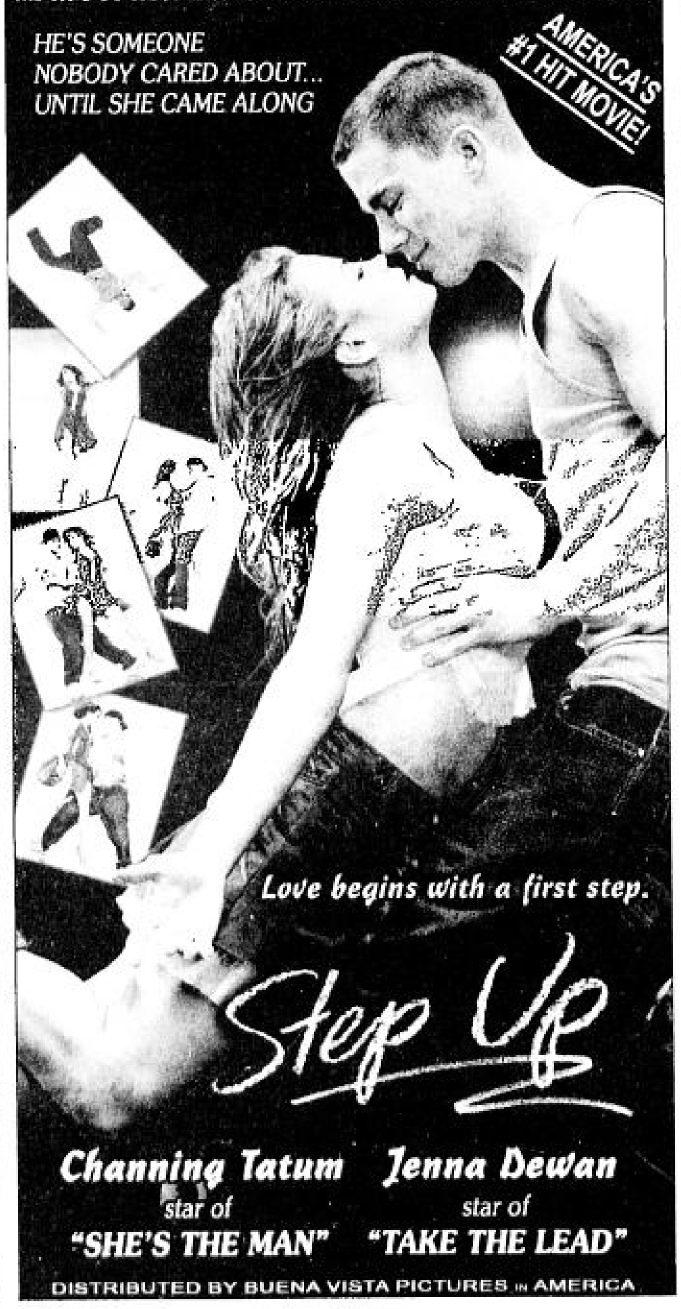
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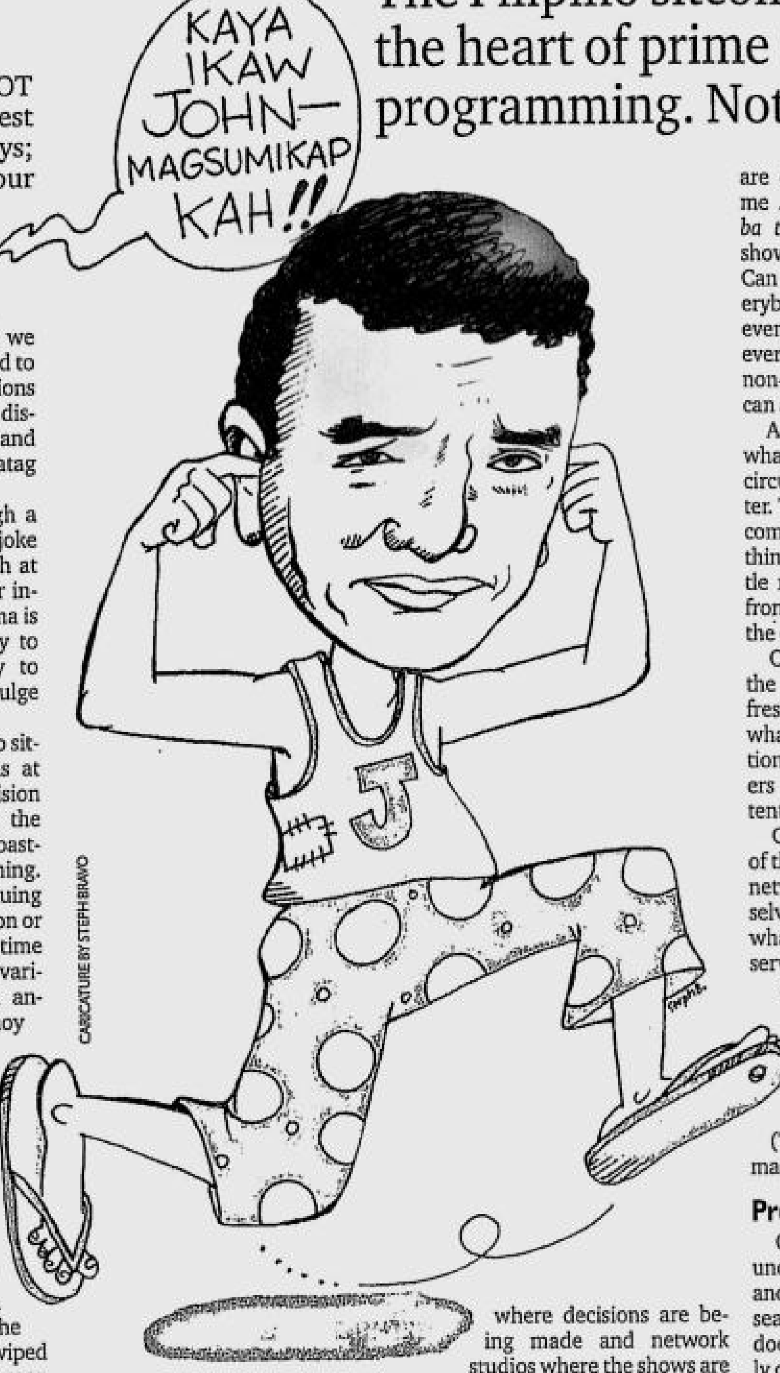
DOA
DEAD OR ALIVE

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "THE TRANSPORTER"

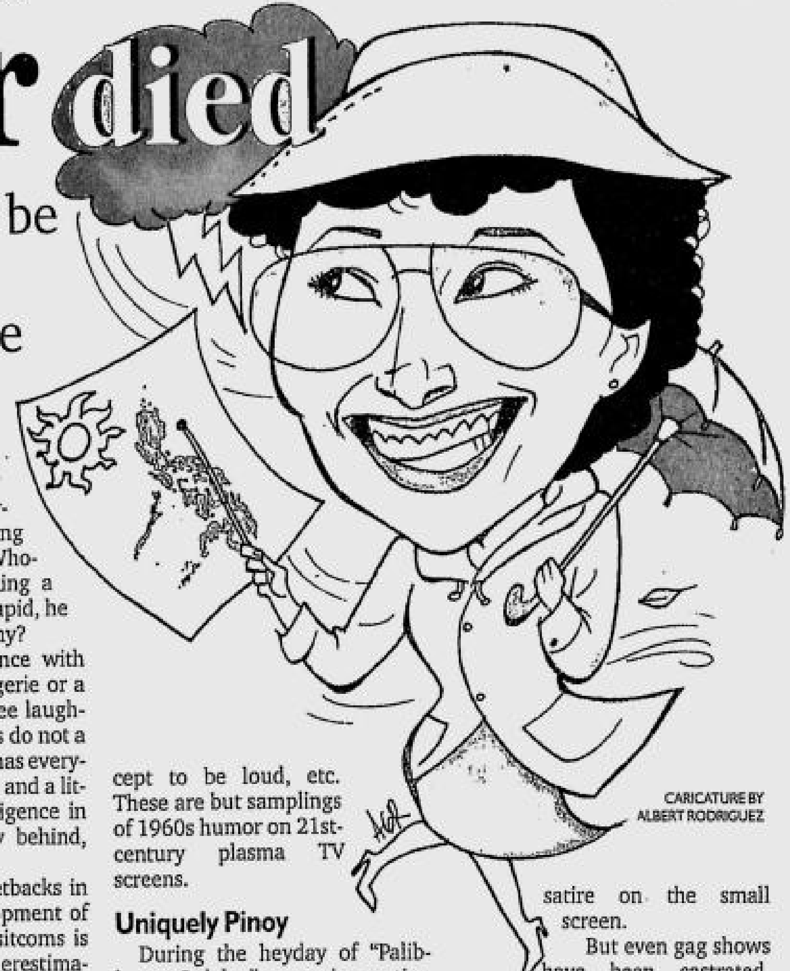
The day the laughter died

The Filipino sitcom used to be the heart of prime time TV programming. Not anymore

By Jose Javier Reyes
Contributor



CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO


CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

LAUGHTER IS NOT only the best medicine for Pinoys; it is a primary tool in our survival kit.

Humor keeps us afloat as a people; it has become the defense mechanism by which we endure everything tragic and surreal. After all, we are the only nation in the world to have staged street revolutions that toppled a dictator and displaced a president with dance and music—including Cynthia Patag singing "Bayan Ko."

Filipinos cannot go through a single day without savoring a joke or two. Let's face it: We laugh at the slightest provocation. Our insatiable appetite for melodrama is surpassed only by our ability to pounce on any opportunity to burst into a silly giggle or indulge in vulgar guffaw.

Not so long ago, the Filipino sitcom (situation comedy) was at the heart of prime time television programming. Those were the days when local television boasted a truly diverse programming. The addiction for continuing bathos was limited to afternoon or early evening viewing. Prime time television was the bastion of variety shows, excellent drama anthologies and the best of Pinoy sitcoms.

But that was before the coming of Thalia of "Marimar." When this first Mexican *telenovela* dubbed in the native language grabbed viewers' unflinching interest and zoomed to unprecedented popularity the entire geography of prime time TV underwent a major shift tantamount to the impact of the meteor that wiped out the dinosaurs. With local soap operas (which later gave birth to costumed *fantaseryes*) occupying the most important weeknight time slots on the two major stations, the sitcom was pushed to the back burner.

Near extinction

The importance of the situation comedy (and all comedy shows for that matter) was diminished to the present state: near-extinction. Who wants to start laughing in the hours that these shows are being aired—when the viewer is either battling with insomnia or contemplating a dose of Melatonin or Stilnox?

Gone is the real Golden Age of Philippine television. Yes, the shows we currently see on commercial TV obviously emphasize production value. What terrific costumes; what eye-popping sets! Flying superheroes of all ages, sizes and mutations! Exotic locations inaccessible to the minimum wage-earner! Dizzying shots from cameras seemingly mounted on amusement park rides! *Dios mio* ... Korean, Taiwanese, Mexican and Peruvian actors speaking in Malolos-perfect Tagalog! Local sitcoms have become mere space-fillers.

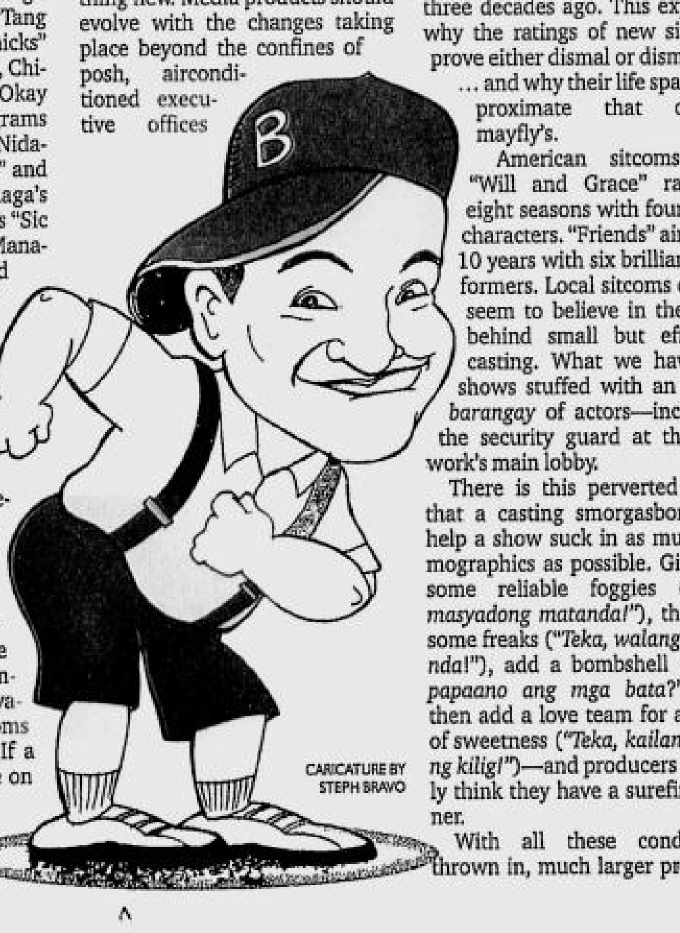
We can only reminisce and feel sorry. Once upon a time, Philippine TV took pride in shows like "Kuwentong Kutsero," the original "John En Marsha," "Tang Tarang Tang," "Chicks to Chicks" (which mutated into "Chika, Chika Chicks"), "Iskul Bukol," "Okay Ka, Fairy Ko." We had programs like "Buhay Artista," "The Nida-Nestor Show," "Hapi House" and formats like Peque Gallaga's "Champoy," Marilou Abaya's "Sic O' Clock News," Johnny Manahan's "Abangan ang Susunod na Kabanata." Twenty years ago, there was "Eh, Kasi Babae!" and "Palibhasa Lalake."

These were long-running programs ... so that we actually watched Maricel Soriano as Shirley grow up before our very eyes. These were original shows, courageous in breaking barriers and impressive because they consistently sought to redefine what the Filipino found funny and endearing. They were innovative because no two sitcoms looked or sounded alike. If a competitor decided to ride on a trend by creating a facsimile, only the original program persisted and succeeded; the second-rate, trying-hard copycat evaporated into oblivion.

To this day, Dolphy is still John Puruntong, Tessie Tomas is Amada Pineda or Barbara Tengco and Vic Sotto is Vic Escalera. The characters immortalized by these comedy shows have been so tightly embraced by the populace, that they became part and parcel of the national consciousness. These characters were not merely funny; they represented ideas and arguments at a certain point in our social and political histories. They were personifications of the Filipino.

Looking back, some of these shows may seem inane ... having resorted to slapstick and other formulaic devices. And yet they offered something new and distinct because they showcased the artistry of comedians in the manner that they gifted the audience with laughter. They gave true insight into Filipino life in its ever-changing norms, providing a glimpse of the mind-set of generations passing and growing. They made us laugh ... so much that now we wonder why the laughter became so memorable.

Somewhere along the way, the magic of Pinoy comedy died. Certainly it was not because of a lack of talents, or a dearth of writers and directors who can offer something new. Media products should evolve with the changes taking place beyond the confines of posh, airconditioned executive offices where decisions are being made and network studios where the shows are mounted.



CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

For shows to work, they must connect with the audience ... not merely rely on raw data given by the research departments based on tests given to random samplings of viewers. Laughter cannot be calibrated or quantified. A dynamic understanding of real life cannot be totally grasped by statistics presented by graphs, charts and a researcher's gobbledygook.

Creation and innovation cannot take place by studying Foto-Me images of who is assumed to constitute the market, much less the personal taste of the demigods who green-light what we should see on TV. Laughter changes through the years because societies change ... and people have brains.

Perverted

To win an audience, to keep them laughing—this can never be achieved by resorting to old formulas, recycling them and pretending that what is on the menu is something new. That is the problem. The Pinoy sitcom died because it did not evolve out of the *segurista* mentality of networks that depends on big-name stars and comedians (even some noncomedians) to carry a show. What we have today is a mere reworking of templates that worked three decades ago. This explains why the ratings of new sitcoms prove either dismal or dismaying ... and why their life spans approximate that of a mayfly's.

American sitcoms like "Will and Grace" ran for eight seasons with four main characters. "Friends" aired for 10 years with six brilliant performers. Local sitcoms do not seem to believe in the logic behind small but effective casting. What we have are shows stuffed with an entire *barangay* of actors—including the security guard at the network's main lobby.

There is this perverted belief that a casting smorgasbord can help a show suck in as much demographics as possible. Give 'em some reliable foggies (*"Teka, masyadong matanda!"*), throw in some freaks (*"Teka, walang maganda!"*), add a bombshell (*"Teka, papaano ang mga bata?"*) and then add a love team for a touch of sweetness (*"Teka, kailangan pa ng kilig!"*)—and producers actually think they have a surefire winner.

With all these condiments thrown in, much larger problems are cooked up. Excuse me ... what is this dish *ba talaga*? Who is this show really meant for? Can you really make everybody happy by giving everyone everything? Whoever said that, by making a non-actor look silly or stupid, he can actually pass for funny?

Assaulting the audience with what looks like a menagerie or a circus does not guarantee laughter. Too many comedians do not a comedy make. Comedy has everything to do with focus ... and a little more effort at intelligence in front of, and especially behind, the cameras.

One of the biggest setbacks in the creation and development of fresher ideas in Pinoy sitcoms is what looks like an underestimation of the audience by the powers that control television content.

Given the demographic profile of the larger bulk of TV audiences, networks have dedicated themselves to feeding the market with what they think the masses deserve or can digest. The usual line a creative team hears during the presentation of possible formats for new shows (comedy or drama) is, *"Masyadong mataas 'yan; hindi maiintindihan ng masa* (That's too high-brow; the masses will not understand)."

Predictable

Of course, this attitude works under the assumption (provided and backed up by in-house research) that the average Pinoy does not opt for anything mentally demanding on his TV menu.

In short: Johnny de la Cruz yearns for nothing more than what is familiar and predictable. He does not watch TV to think, analyze or dissect issues pertinent to his life. He does not want to be reminded of his miseries. After an exhausting day of toiling like a worker ant and enduring traffic and pollution, he simply wants to put his feet up, sit back, relax and become completely numb.

Johnny de la Cruz wants to be transported to an anesthetic *telenovela* world where heroines are beautiful but cursed with unbelievable karma, where fantasy worlds sparkle and costumed heroes swim or fly. He turns into a sleepwalker capable of peals of laughter generated by the inane, ridiculous and sometimes even vulgar. In other words, Johnny de la Cruz is a media zombie.

In an attempt to cater to this market, the rule of the least common denominator prevails. Networks assume that educated audiences must have been exiled to cable channels and are now following the domestic drama of orangutans on The Animal Planet or watching Martha Stewart turn shoe boxes into ribbon dispensers.

They assume that the middle class is glued to HBO, Star Movies, CNN or ANC ... and the rest, those devoid of cable or satellite facilities in single-TV homes, are stuck with commercial broadcasting with no other option, anyway, but perhaps watching pirated DVDs from Quiapo.

Working on this premise, networks have stuck to creative programming that can be summarized as color-by-numbers or recipe-faithful *chop suey*. Actors are recycled, much like formats, from cancelled shows.

Performers under exclusive contracts (read: loyalty) with the kingdom of networks are shuffled and then lumped together under what pretend to be new programs. Comedians are sadly diminished into stereotypes—usually the same shrieking, screaming, larger-than-life buffoons in routines and problems that have been around since the first Macapagal was president of the republic.

Sitcoms offer the same fatigued situations—feuding neighbors; impossible in-laws; rich-boy/girl-poor-boy/girl; children oozing with nauseating cuteness, a tribe of men equating funny with baboon behavior; girls made to behave as though their breast measurements were higher than their IQs; an overdressed, politically incorrect, screaming homosexual of absolutely no use to humanity except to be loud, etc. These are but samplings of 1960s humor on 21st-century plasma TV screens.

Uniquely Pinoy

During the heyday of "Palibhasa Lalake," an innovation unique to Pinoy comedy emerged: *laglagan*. There was nothing basically ingenious about this device. The actors played around on the set, delivering spontaneous punch lines not from the plotted script but based on current events or the lives of the cast members. The jokes became all too personal—and the laughter unusually natural, giving a glimpse of the more salacious side of show business which Pinoys enjoy very much, indeed.

Laglagan became successful because it shattered the suspension of disbelief—until it reached the point of being misused and abused by other sitcoms. The distinction between celebrity life and role-playing was shattered. Jokes were dished out at the expense of credible plots and even distinct characterizations. With actors bashing each other as real people and not as characters in a story line, the already wafer-thin script became practically invisible and dispensable. Goofing around was mistaken for a comedic alternative.

Mistaking *kalokohan* with *katatawanan* contributed to the predictability of the genre, hastening the death of truly intelligent comedy shows. Verbal humor was conveniently replaced with cheap slapstick; witticism was buried in water-dousing, head-butting and actors undressing each other on camera—literally and metaphorically.

This regression took place not because the intelligent comedian became extinct. We still have Tessie Tomas, Nova Villa, Ai-Ai de las Alas, Roderick Paulate, Vic Sotto, Joey de Leon; and there's a new generation of funny men who have grown beyond being one-joke wonders—the best of them being Michael V. Still, to this day, comedians are still considered second-rate citizens in the industry, inferior to the dramatic actors who can shed gallons of tears to usher in a commercial gap.

Anyone with a distinct knowledge of acting knows that a brilliant comic actor can turn in a heart-tugging dramatic performance better than their revered *telenovela* counterparts. Dolphy is the undisputed King of Philippine comedy, yet his rare dramatic performances are equally precious gems.

Gag shows

Even if the Pinoy sitcom is just about as good as dead, gag shows still try to keep a semblance of intelligence in their approach to humor. Thankfully, everyone still remembers "Super Laff-In," "Champoy," "Sic O' Clock News" ... and thank goodness we still have Uro de la Cruz's "Bubble Gang." Gag shows, equally difficult to sustain, if not actually more demanding, used to carry such sting and venom. They were the best form of political and social satire on the small screen.

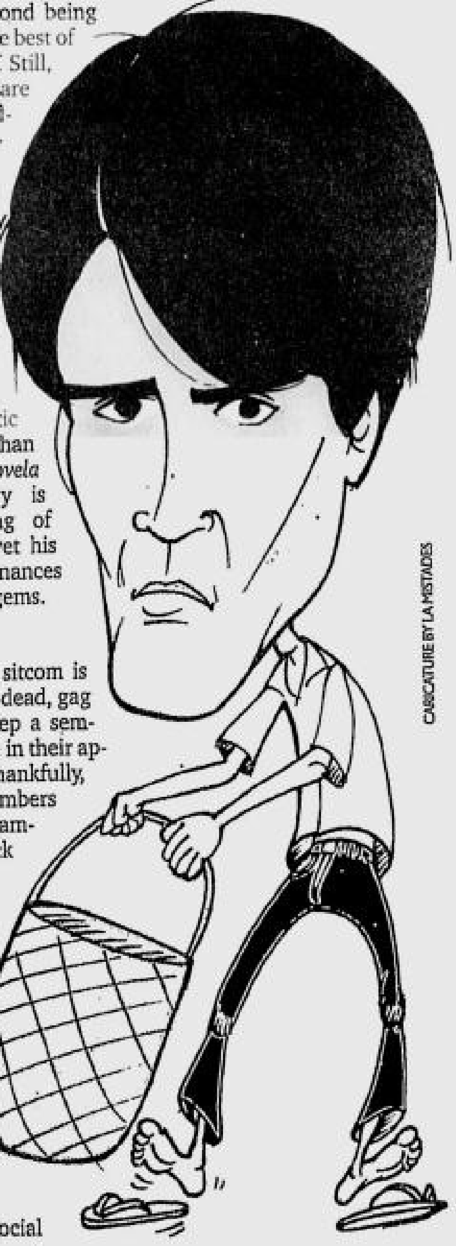
But even gag shows have been castrated. Pinoy TV comedy has lost its teeth. Whether it is because of political restrictions, real or imagined, or the paranoia of network executives who'd rather not rock the boat or poke sticks in the hornet's nest, satires like "Abangan ang Susunod na Kabanata" can no longer find their way to prime time programming. TV comedy has become a bland landscape where everything is pre-fabricated and seemingly devoid not only of imagination but also conviction.

So why brandish the tag line that commercial television is dedicated to uplifting the Filipino? This makes it all the more ironic—unless the "*bobo*-fication" of the masses is considered a panacea for national ailments.

Menopause

Well, yes ... there have been attempts to do something new and daring, but they've failed. The failure can be attributed to the fact that shows which do not rate instantly are given very little chance for its audience to develop. In an industry where everything—whether audience share ratings or commercial loads—is translated into numbers, success is equated with the quickest form of gratification and, understandably, profit.

Laughter in television died the day before yesterday. Whether it is because local networks are going through creative menopause, or audiences simply do not demand for more, we must content ourselves with excitement-devoid dishes offered to us seven days a week. But all hope is not lost. Menopause babies turn out to be either cretins ... or geniuses.


CARICATURE BY LA MISTADES

"MACBETH"

Modern-day Shakespeare on Hallmark

"HE WAS NOT OF AN AGE, BUT FOR ALL time." So said dramatist Ben Jonson of master playwright William Shakespeare.

The Hallmark Channel features Shakespeare's classics with a contemporary touch this October, with four made-for-TV movies airing Sundays at 9 p.m.

'Much Ado About Nothing'

The sparring of Beatrice and Benedick in "Much Ado About Nothing" (Oct. 8) takes place in the newsroom. Bitter ex-lovers Beatrice Evans (Sarah Parish) and Benedick Taylor (Damian Lewis) are reunited as co-anchors and this turns the newsroom upside down.

'Macbeth'

"Macbeth" (Oct. 15) is the riveting portrait of a man's fall, consumed by his greed and corruption. Head chef Joe Macbeth (James McAvoy) spends hours perfecting culinary masterpieces but restaurant owner Duncan Docherty gets all the praise.

One night, three witch-like scavengers predict that Joe would one day own the restaurant.

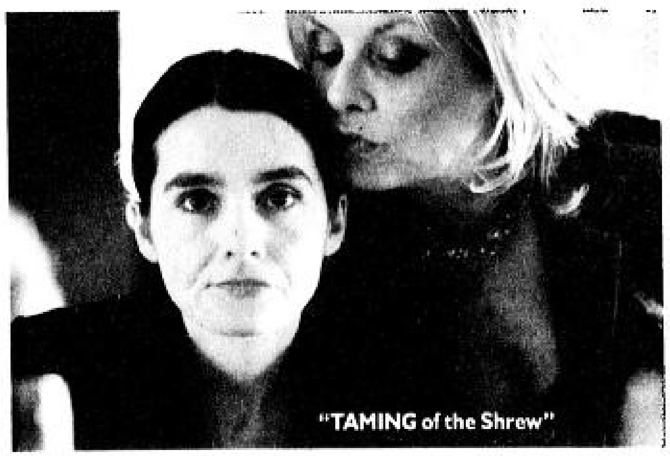
'Taming of the Shrew'

Kate Minola (Shirley Henderson) is the "shrew" in the battle-of-the-sexes comedy "Taming of the Shrew" (Oct. 22). A bright and talented politician, Kate is being groomed for bigger things if only she were not too severe and crabby.

The electorate prefers married and family-oriented officials so when the passionate and eccentric Petruchio (Rufus Sewell) proposes, what is the logical thing for the 38-year-old singleton to do but say "yes?"

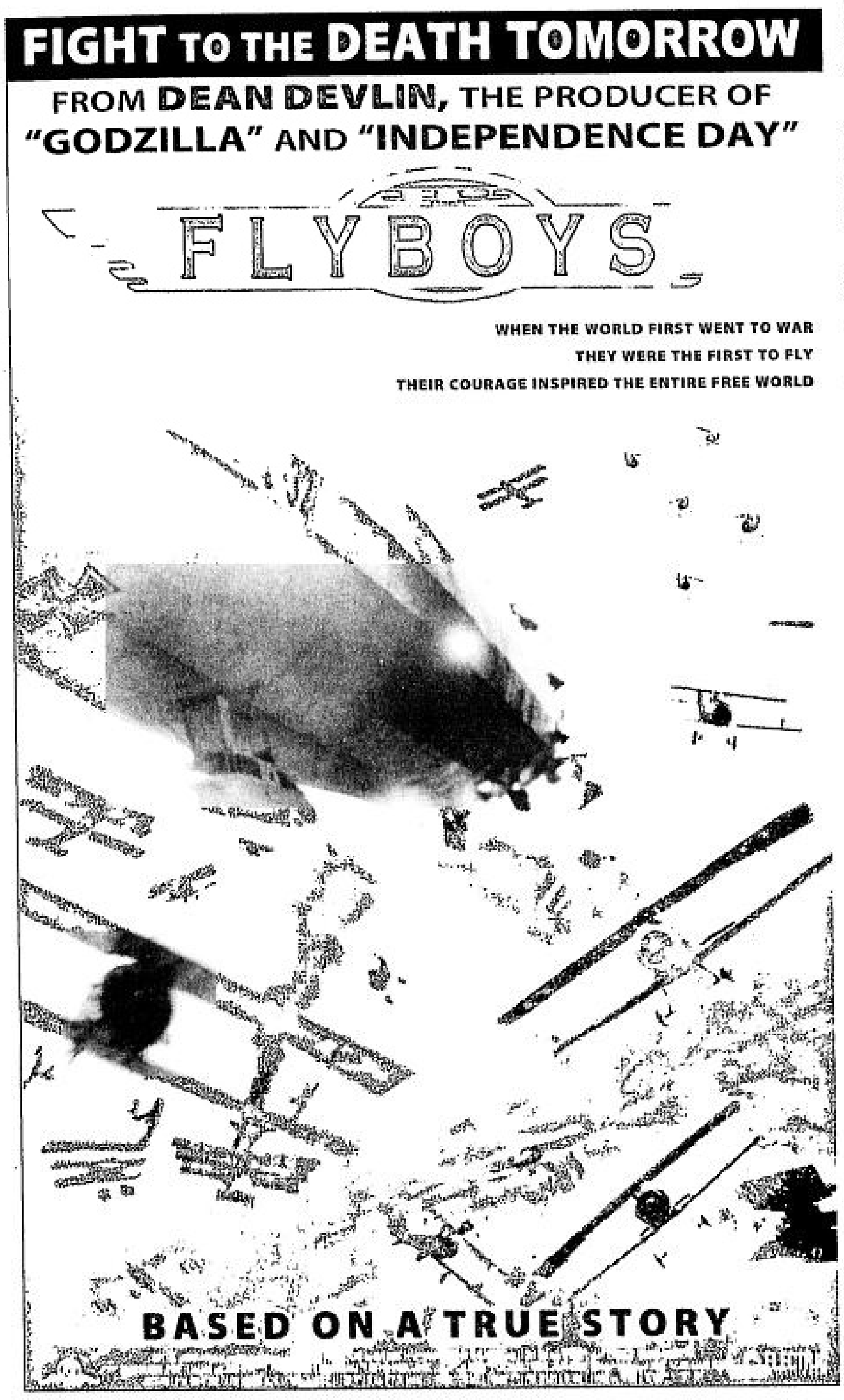
'Midsummer Night's Dream'

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Oct. 29), shows former hippies Theo (Bill Paterson) and Polly (Imelda Staunton) celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary and the engagement of their daughter Hermia (Zoe Tapper) to childhood sweetheart James at a forest theme park. But chaos ensues when Zander crashes the party and Hermia reveals that it's Zander that she loves. Oberon, King of Fairies, resolves to cause more mischief in the mess.


"TAMING of the Shrew"

"A MIDSUMMER Night's Dream"

"MUCH Ado About Nothing"


FIGHT TO THE DEATH TOMORROW
FROM DEAN DEVLIN, THE PRODUCER OF
"GODZILLA" AND "INDEPENDENCE DAY"
FLYBOYS
WHEN THE WORLD FIRST WENT TO WAR
THEY WERE THE FIRST TO FLY
THEIR COURAGE INSPIRED THE ENTIRE FREE WORLD
BASED ON A TRUE STORY

Turning the tables on the biggest cad

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN "JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE," THE BIG man on Campus also turns out to be the biggest cad of them all.

Hunky basketball team captain John Tucker (**Jesse Metcalfe**) juggles three girlfriends at the same time with the cold insouciance of a sleight-of-hand artist.

Until a fourth girl, Kate (**Brittany Snow**) forces Tucker's three victims (played by **Arielle Kebbel, Ashanti** and **Sophia Bush**) to accept the bitter truth that the handsome beau they share has made patsies of them all.

Determined to exact painful vengeance, the three victims decide to make the dowdy Kate over, so Tucker will fall in love with her—and she can then break his heart.

In the course of the makeover, the girls impart words of "wisdom" about how women can keep their suitors interested and excited.

They also think up schemes to embarrass Tucker, like seducing him into wearing a revealing thong—and then shoving him into a hotel corridor, for everyone to gawk and laugh at.

The play is eventful enough, and the movie is occasionally perky, but it eventually runs out of comic steam, no thanks to its young cast's predictable performances.

Young female viewers could find the vengeful proceedings delightfully cathartic, however.

Unfortunately, the viewer can see the story's cautionary denouement (Tucker gets his painful comeuppance) coming many minutes before it actually transpires.

So, when it finally happens, its effect is far from being delightfully instructive.

Still, the movie has perked up Metcalfe's stellar career, so we should be seeing him in other "cutely sexy" romps in film seasons to come—until he belatedly realizes that there's no real future in film fluff like this, and opts to do more solid, sterner stuff, as other cute comers like **Ashon Kutcher** and **Ryan Phillipe** eventually did.

'Dead or Alive'

Another current film, "Dead or Alive," is for video game and fantasy martial arts fans only. Its thin plot premise involves a crafty villain's plot to hold a competition for the top fighter in the world—so that he can siphon off their expertise and sell them to other captains of villainy in different parts of the globe.

Don't bother to analyze the logic of that plan, it's simply a handy peg on which the production can hang its, far-out fight scenes, which are designed for maximum visual effect.

Strangely enough, many of the fight tilt's finalists are women, and they're sexy on top of being adept with their fists and legs.

Even more curiously, they also love fighting while dressed in wee bikinis, so the movie's fight sequences are even more of a sight to behold.

Well, it's all eye candy, so don't belabor the improbable kicks and shticks. Anyway, at film's end, the villain's dastardly plot goes pffft!, the good guys and gals end up on top, and all's well with the fantasy world of escapist video games.

The Company

The popular vocal group, The Company, has recorded its first Christmas album. It will be launched with a special performance at 5 p.m. on Oct. 8 at the Shangri-La Mall.

"The Christmas Album" presents Yuletide classics in an assortment of settings, flavors, moods and rhythms—the unique Company way.

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Kythe Foundation for the benefit of children with cancer and other chronic illness. Call Kythe at 376-3454.

Justin Timberlake

Justin Timberlake has a new album, "FutureSex/LoveSounds," and his single, "Sexy Back," is set to become a massive hit.

Catch Justin on Channel [V] this month as he takes the limelight as the channel's Chosen One.

NEW *Fraxel* retouches the skin flaws that add 5 years to your looks!

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Just like computer retouching of a photo, new Fraxel will erase Melasma (those dark, embarrassing marks of discoloration), brush away eye wrinkles, close open pores, rejuvenate the neck, chest and hands (the most tell-tale signs of aging!) and smoothen skin texture.

It works by concentrating on a fraction of your skin at a time. You don't suffer inconvenient side effects. You see and feel terrific results immediately. After 3 to 5 treatments you'll be amazed. Call Facial Care now for a free consultation today.

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